



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES  
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January 3, 2005

Marketa Gautreau  
Assistant Secretary  
Office of Community Services  
Department of Social Services  
State of Louisiana  
P.O. Box 3318  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70821

RECEIVED

JAN 12 2004

Dear Assistant Secretary Gautreau:

This correspondence is to acknowledge receipt of your December 10, 2004 letter transmitting Louisiana's resubmitted Final Report for federal fiscal years 2000-2004 and Five-Year Child and Family Services (CFS) Plan for federal fiscal years 2005-2009. We are pleased to notify you that the Regional Office has completed the review of the referenced documents. Because both documents must be made available to the Louisiana citizenry, your assigned federal representative identified two technical assistance objectives:

1. to insure that the Final Report provided a comprehensive picture of the noteworthy accomplishments realized by your staff and Louisiana child welfare stakeholders during the first five years - particularly the effective collaboration between the Office of Community Services, the Children's Trust Fund, the Louisiana Supreme Court's Office of the Judicial Administrator, Foster and Adoptive Parents Association, and other stakeholders, as well as the involvement of the courts and federally recognized Tribes in the Child and Family Service Review process; and
2. to incorporate system-wide goals and the approved Child and Family Services Review Program Improvement Plan (PIP) into the Five-Year CFS Plan.

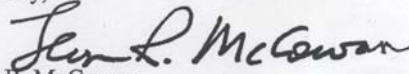
Our review suggests that the technical assistance provided on the Final Report, Five-Year CFS Plan and the approved Program Improvement Plan by Thurston "T.J." Jones, William Hornsby, Beth Frizzell (consultant with National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement) and the Children's Bureau Data Team was successful. You have achieved a Final Report which showcases the Office of Community Services' many significant accomplishments and a strong Five-Year CFS Plan to structure the years ahead.

We extend appreciation to Joel McLain and his staff, Betty Becker, Patsy Johnson, Kaaren Hebert and other members of your team for their efforts in preparing and timely submitting quality products to this office.

As you are aware, Louisiana must submit an Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR) for the first year of the new Five-Year CFS Plan to this office by June 30, 2005. We expect the Children's Bureau to issue the governing Program Instruction (PI) on or before May 31, 2005. In the interim, your staff may review ACYF-CB-PI-04-01 and ACYF-CB-PI-03-05 to begin preparing the draft APSR. Additionally, T.J. will continue to consult with Joel McLain. We anticipate that their dialogue will focus on the 2005 PI issuance, its requirements, Regional Office recommendations for APSR entries including goal accomplishments relating to child abuse and prevention, Chafee Foster Care Independence Act, education and training vouchers, and compliance with Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA).

If you or members of your staff have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact June Lloyd, Program Manager at 214.767.8466 (e-mail: [jlloyd@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:jlloyd@acf.hhs.gov)), or Thurston "T.J." Jones, Children and Families Program Specialist, at 214.767.4158 (e-mail: [tjones@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:tjones@acf.hhs.gov)), Office of State and Tribal Programs.

Sincerely,



Leon R. McCowan  
Regional Administrator

STATE OF LOUISIANA

**Child and Family Services Plan**

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**THE CONSOLIDATED  
CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES PLAN**

STATE OF LOUISIANA

Child and Family Services Plan

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The seal of the State of Louisiana is a large, circular emblem in the background. It features an eagle with wings spread, perched on a shield. The words "STATE OF LOUISIANA" are written in an arc at the top, and "CONFIDENCE" is written in an arc at the bottom. The date "1804" is at the very bottom. The words "UNION JUSTICE" are also visible within the seal's design.

**The Consolidated  
Child & Family Services Plan  
2000 – 2004**

**Final Report**

**Section 1**

# STATE OF LOUISIANA

### **Introduction**

This report profiles and summarizes the progress and achievements made by the Department of Social Services, Office of Community Services in its implementation of the Consolidated Child and Family Services Plan, October 1, 1999-September 30, 2004. The information in the final report is presented in accordance with the requirements issued on February 2, 2004 by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families (Log No. ACYF-CB-PI-04-01). In order to receive their Federal Year 2005 financial allotment, states must submit a Final Report in compliance with the Program Instructions.

The final report consists of a comprehensive review and it charts the progress and achievements of specific program initiatives and agency activities during the period covered by the Consolidated Plan for FFY 2000-2004. These sections are as follows with a brief description of contents:

1. **Child Welfare Continuum** – This section profiles progress and achievement in the implementation of the major service delivery programs of Child Protection Investigations, Family Services, Foster Care, Adoption Services.
2. **Staff Training** – This section summarizes each of the goals and objectives in the area of training and staff development and contains charts, progress made and lessons learned.
3. **Promoting Safe and Stable Families** – This section describes the Agency's implementation of the Social Security Act, Title IV-B, Subpart 2 initiatives. Among these are the establishment and maintenance of over 30 community- based family resource centers and many other initiatives.
4. **Children's Trust Fund** – This section profiles the progress of one of the Agency's closest collaborators, the Louisiana Children's Trust Fund, a Louisiana agency providing primary prevention services statewide through grass roots, community based programs.
5. **Technical Assistance** – This section describes how the Agency utilized training and technical assistance made available by the Administration for Children and Families.
6. **Research and Evaluation** – Over the course of the implementation of the plan, the Agency has utilized available research and evaluation services. These are summarized for the five year period of the plan.
7. **Management Information System** – This section describes the rapidly emerging and ever changing part of service delivery in a modern child welfare agency.

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8. **Indian Child Welfare Act and Tribal Collaboration** – This section describes the development of an improved infrastructure allowing for networking, agreements, cross training, and communication between American Indian tribal representatives and the Agency staff at parish, regional, and state levels.
9. **Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act** – This section contains information on agency initiatives funded by the “CAN Grant” as it is known internally.
10. **Citizen Review Panel** – The collaboration and evolution of community-based support is summarized in this section.
11. **Children’s Justice Act Grant** – Initiatives funded by this grant are outlined in this section.
12. **John H. Chafee Independence Program** – This section profiles the efforts to reach adolescents who are in Foster Care and to prepare youth for young adulthood.
13. **Community Consultation and Collaboration** – This section provides information on the progress (in addition to those presented above) made in expanding and enhancing community collaboration .



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## 1.1 Child Welfare Continuum

### 1.1.A Child Protection Investigations

**Goal 1:** Safety

**Indicators:** Children are first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect/Timeliness of Investigations/Repeat Maltreatment.

**Data Source/Progress Toward Goal:** TIPS/NCANDS/AFCARS-73.9% of victims and 71.3% of parents seen within the response priority timeframe in 2002. 80% of victims and 77% of parents seen within the response priority timeframe in 2003. CFSR Final Report 2001(6.8%); Louisiana Data Profile CY 2002 (7.5%); Louisiana Data Profile CY 2003 (8.7%).

### **Performance/Achievement:**

Developed Safety and Risk Assessment Protocols and Instruments - The Agency continued to revise its risk and safety assessment processes and on-going training was provided. The instrument is currently used in all 10 regions.

Developed Media Campaign Promoting Child Safety – Several media campaigns were on-going. A campaign in 2002 included purchasing airtime for an existing Public Service Announcement (PSA) about the dangers of leaving children alone in a car. Airtime was purchased from each of the state’s television market for airing this PSA. This PSA was aired during the summer months when this problem is more likely to occur. In 2003, a new PSA was developed to address the problem of infants dying while co-sleeping with an adult or sibling. The PSA focused on unsafe sleeping arrangements for infants. The PSA was distributed to all radio and television stations throughout the State. (Airtime was not purchased for this PSA and airing it was voluntary.)

Decreased Caseload Standard for Child Protection Investigation (CPI) Workers –Caseload standards were decreased to 10 cases per worker so workloads would be more manageable.

Developed a Pilot CPI Dual Track System - The Agency has developed and piloted a dual track system for investigations in the Orleans and Jefferson Regions. Higher risk cases are investigated by Agency staff. A percent of low risk cases are referred for assessment of the family situation. Services are provided as needed.

Improved Response Time – Efforts were made to improve this in the area of interviewing victim(s) and parent/caretakers within response priority timeframes. The percentage of victims and parents, as found in Quality Assurance data, seen within time frames remains similar to 2002 when this strategy was adopted. However, the measurement changed to CFSR data source in 2003 and there was a

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decline noted. This could be due to change in measurement Strategy. This will continue to be monitored with the revised measurement strategy.

Decreased the Occurrence of Repeat Maltreatment: - A new safety form has been developed and instituted. The array of preventive services have been improved by the development and availability of Title IV-B, Subpart 2 funded Child Welfare Family Resource Centers.

Implemented Family Group Decision Making – Implemented in Baton Rouge Region February 2003. This strength based model of case planning utilizes extended family and friends in resolution of problems. CPI, Foster Care, Family Services and Families in Need of Services (FINS) referrals are eligible for participation in the process.

### **Barriers/Challenges Impacting Goal Attainment:**

Louisiana has developed a number of strategies to improve safety for children. The caseload standard for CPI workers has been 10 investigations a month since the 1998-1999. Despite the lowering of caseload standards, not all workers' caseloads are maintained at 10 cases. This is due to the large number of CPI reports received in a particular area or at a particular time. A new safety/risk assessment form has been developed and implemented. The Agency is now recruiting staff from local universities and has changed the required experience, required for employment allowing masters level social workers to begin working for the Agency upon graduation. In addition, the Agency has increased the use of the local Child Welfare and Foster and Adoptive Family Resource Centers funded with Title IV-B, Subpart 2 funds in the communities. Statewide, increased substance abuse treatment resources continue to be researched. However, significant barriers affected progress in the area of safety and these include the on-going need for staff retention, available community resources and increased drug abuse in communities.

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## 1.1.B Family Services:

**Goal:** Safety

**Indicators:** Children are safely maintained in their homes, whenever possible and appropriate/services to family to protect child(ren) in home and prevent removal.

**Data Source/Progress Toward Goal:** CFSR data-79% of families received services to protect child and prevent removal in 2004. Peer Case Review (PCR) data-91% of families received services to protect children in their home in 2002-2003.

## **Performance/Achievement:**

**Form 6 - Developed and implemented statewide, the Form 6 is used to make referrals to the Family Services or Foster Care Programs.**

Improved Use of Preventive Assistance Funds -Staff use these limited funds whenever possible to allow children to stay in their home. Preventive Assistance Funds provide concrete services or “basics of living” needs and assistance for at risk families.

Child Welfare Family Resource Centers- Centers were designed to serve CPI/FS clients. Centers are in operation in each region. These centers provide a wide range of services aimed at increasing safety and reducing the risk of maltreatment to children.

Form 5 Safety Assessment Form-A new safety assessment form was developed, piloted, and implemented statewide. The form helps workers to comprehensively look at family dynamics and other factors in the context of immediate safety concerns for children.

Risk Assessment Policy and Form – Form 60-A is used to assess risk, to identify risk factors for children, to assess repeat maltreatment and to develop a family service plan that will reduce the identified risk to the children. The form is also used to assist with case decisions to continue services on closed cases.

**Barriers/Challenges: Impacting Goal Attainment**

Over the past five years, the Agency has struggled with very limited resources for family preservation, particularly in the complex areas of substance abuse, domestic violence and serious mental health problems. Families in Need of Services (FINS) cases also tax already limited staff time and available resources. Rural areas of the State have faced the most challenges in developing and sustaining adequate community resources to assist families.

In addition, we continued to lose staff allocations due to budget cuts. While there was an initiative to reduce the caseload standard in Family Services cases, the complexity of most of these cases make a caseload of 15 families a significant challenge.

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**Foster Care-** include substitute, temporary care (e.g. foster family home, residential care facility, kinship care) that is utilized when the child's health and safety is at risk if he remains in the home. The state is awarded legal custody of the child by the court of jurisdiction. The foster parents and private agency foster care providers work with agency staff and parents toward achieving permanency. Intensive work and case management services are offered to families to help them reach a point where the child can be returned home, if return home is appropriate.

**Data Source/Progress Toward Goal:** TIPS/NCANDS/AFCARS - (2001 - 0.04%); (2002 - 0.59%); (2004- 0.60%)

**Expanded Day Care Services** – Foster Care policy expanded the possible use of day care services by foster parents. Approximately 450 children in Foster Care placement received day care each month.

**Expanded Universe of Foster Homes** – The Agency has developed two new categories of foster homes; Bridge Homes, which help children make the transition from foster care to adoption; and Adoption Resource Homes, which are used for placement of children at risk of not returning home and as a result being freed for adoption. Both types of homes are available in each of the 10 regions.

The Agency's statistics from 1999 showed that we had approximately 2500 foster and dually certified families plus an additional 1000 adoptive families. We learned that this was an inflated number as the computer programming included adoptive homes that were open for subsidy payments only. Also, we had incorrect information in the data system. Correction was undertaken by Home Development Units statewide to close foster homes that were not being used. Also, many families wishing to adopt healthy, young Caucasian infants were referred to private agencies (OCS does not have a need for adoptive homes for this type of child). The most recent and accurate report indicates that we have 2000 foster and dually certified homes plus an additional 500 families who are certified to only adopt.

**Increased Timely Certification of Foster/Adoptive Homes** – New policy issuance plus record reviews resulted in 585 homes being certified timely.

**Increased Respite Days** – The number of respite days for foster/adoptive parents was increased in 2001. Respite services are provided through the Child Welfare Family Resource Centers and Foster/Adoptive Family Resource Centers.

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Respite days are provided also through payments through the Tracking Information and Payment System (TIPS). The following are the yearly amounts paid through TIPS (for the state fiscal years):

	2001	2002	2003	2004
Foster Care	7,545	7,324	7,057	7,748
Adoption	419	388	921	1,061
TOTAL	7,964	7,712	7,978	8,809

The Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program funded family resource centers for adoptive and foster families. The centers provide respite services in addition to those described above paid from TIPS.

Revised Licensing Standards - Agency staff participated on a committee for proposed revisions to licensing standards. The proposed revisions are still pending.

Provided In-Service Training for Foster/Adoptive Parents – Numerous trainings were offered statewide on an annual basis so that foster parents could obtain the required hours each year. Some in-service trainings have also been made available on line. The Agency purchased the Parents Resource Information for Development and Education (PRIDE) in-service training program and is in the process of offering this training to each region.

Improved Matching of Children with Families – The Agency developed and began implementation of the Level of Care program in June 2002; implemented Concurrent Planning statewide; Multi-Ethnic Placement Act/Inter-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA/IEPA) training offered statewide and included in Act 710 training and offered internet in-service training to foster/adoptive parents.

### **Barriers/Challenges Impacting Goal Attainment:**

The Agency has continued to strive to provide safety to children through service provision. One of the major accomplishments during the last CFSP cycle was the development and first phase implementation of the Level of Care program in the Covington Region. Level of Care provides staff with a system for measuring the stress of foster/adoptive parents in relation to their providing care for foster children. This program may be expanded to other regions throughout the State. Another achievement included the utilization of technical assistance days from the National Resource Center on Permanency Planning and Foster Care. This consultation and training assists the Agency in recruitment and retention of qualified foster/adoptive homes. Safety has also been enhanced from the increase of respite days for foster/adoptive families and the numerous in-service trainings available in each region for certified families.

Overall, Louisiana has done well in meeting the federal compliance standard (1.78%) on the incidence of child abuse and neglect in foster care and this has been a goal of the agency for the last five year planning cycle. The data indicates slight increases in the percentage of abuse and neglect in foster care since 2002. Our compliance may be effected by the Agency's work to

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make improvements in how the data is generated. Numerous changes have been made in how this data is used because the Agency concluded that the numbers did not accurately reflect the incidence of child abuse and neglect in foster care. Work continues in this area. Loss of state funding resulted in loss of staff positions. The Agency continues to work on reducing the incidence of child abuse and neglect in foster care. This item is included in the proposed Program Improvement Plan (PIP).

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## **Foster Care/Home Development:**

**Goal 2:** Permanency

**Indicators:** Stability of placements; number of replacements;  
length of time to reunification; foster care re-entries

**Data Source/Progress Toward Goal:** TIPS/AFCARS/NCANDS/PCR - (2001-Number of children in care less than 12 mo. with no more than 2 placements 83.16%); (2002 – 81.37%); (PCR-SFY 2002-2003 – 74.3%); (2004- Stability of Foster Care placements - 83.30 %). CFSR Final Report 2001 (83.3%); Louisiana Data Profile CY 2002 (81.7%); Louisiana Data Profile CY 2003 (80.9%) TIME to Reunification: CFSR Final Report 2001 (65.0%); Louisiana Data Profile CY 2002 (68.3%); Louisiana Data Profile CY 2003 (68.5%).

## **Performance/Achievement:**

Placed Children in Least Restrictive Setting – The Agency expanded the number of Bridge homes and Adoptive Resource homes statewide.

Recruitment, Certification and Retention of Foster/Adoptive Parents – The Agency hired a contract recruiter, and received technical assistance days from National Child Welfare Resource Center on Foster Care and Permanency Planning to assist in the areas of recruitment and retention.

Reduced Number of Replacements – The Agency provided in-service training and improved matching of children with families through Concurrent Planning and referrals to the National Child Welfare Family Resource Centers and National Child Welfare Resource Center on Foster/Adoptive Family Resource Centers. Statistics indicate that 80.9% of our children have two or fewer placements for those in care less than 12 months. The national standard is 86.7%. The Foster/Adoptive Family Resource Centers have targeted increasing outcome performance in this area as one of their goals.

Increased Foster Parent Board Rates – Board rates for foster parents were increased in 1999.

Provided Respite through Resource Centers – The Agency expanded the number of respite days available to foster/adoptive families since 2000.

Expanded eligibility for Day Care to foster children - Foster care policy expanded the possible use of day care services by foster parents. Approximately 450 children receive day care each month.



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Developed Home Development Task Force – A committee was established and accomplishments included: development of a new corrective action form; a revised withdrawal form; development of a checklist for foster home re-evaluation and certification; created orientation video; updated MAPP/GPS to include MEPA/IEPA; developed new application form; updated Home Development Form series; and created a recruitment brochure.

Updated Model Approach to Partnership in Parenting/Group Preparation and Selection Assessment (MAPP/GPS) Training – The Agency updated MAPP/GPS training to include Multi-Ethnic Placement Act/Inter-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA/IEPA) issues.

Contracted with Media Consultant – The Agency developed media spots on public access television, billboard advertisements, and radio spots.

Moved Families Out of Provisional Certification Status - The Agency issued new policy to move families out of provisional status by either certifying or closing the homes. Progress was made.

Developed and Implemented Family Group Decision Making – Implemented in Baton Rouge region in February 2003. A strength-based model of case planning utilizes extended family and friends in the resolution of problems. From the beginning of the project through February 2, 2004, there were 14 referrals. Of the 14 referrals, meetings were completed with 10 of the families. A total of 308 participants, 47 of which were children, benefited from FGDM. Of the children who benefited from FGDM, 68% were not in placement.

After participants completed the FGDM process, they were asked to complete a satisfaction survey. Of the participants who completed surveys, 36% indicated that they felt like the process was a helpful one in which they were able to develop a good plan. Participants felt that plans were realistic, addressed their concerns and respected their family values.

Developed and Implemented Concurrent Planning – Implemented statewide May 2001. During the period of 2001 – 2004, several enhancements to concurrent planning were done: (1) Concurrent planning approaches were added to the Office's new worker preparatory training; (2) Concurrent planning became a part of the implemented Peer Case Review activities and case review questions. This occurred starting in the 2002 – 2003 review year. Reports and corrective actions were generated from the Peer Case Reviews; (3) Video conferences were held approximately annually during the period to focus on case consultation with staff statewide and clarifications and supports were provided to practitioners on concurrent planning; (4) A specialized booklet was published entitled: The Promise To Your Child: Foster Care is Temporary (June 2001). The booklet which explains the concurrent planning process is currently available for reordering as needed.

Developed and Implemented Level of Care – Began pilot in Covington Region in June 2002. Since piloting the project in 2002, funding considerations and provider concerns warranted halting the implementation in 2004. The pilot did not proceed to full implementation due to funding issues. From the onset, the legislative intent for statewide full implementation for the level of care

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project were that the financing of level of care be budget neutral. It was found that statewide implementation would have required significant additional funding.

Developed and Implemented the Mediation Project – Implemented in Jefferson and Orleans Regions. Cases are selected by the court for referral to this specialized mediation. A trained mediator works with Agency staff and the referred family to finalize a plan of action. The Child Advocacy Mediation Project (CAMP) began operation in July 2002. It was initiated by the Court Improvement Program of the Louisiana Supreme Court at the urging of Judge Nancy Konrad and Judge Ernestine Gray, who believed that children in the foster care system would be better served through the use of mediation in their cases. As part of CAMP, qualified domestic mediators were identified and trained as juvenile mediators. Baptist Community Ministries awarded a three-year grant to the Louisiana Supreme Court to fund a pilot mediation project in the Jefferson and Orleans Parish Juvenile Courts that would serve as a model for juvenile mediation programs across the state. It was decided that the pilot project would deal only with Child in Need of Care (CINC) cases, i.e., cases in which children had been removed from their home due to abuse and neglect. CAMP began to mediate cases in July 2002. The purpose of mediation is to have the parents, children and family have input into the plans for the child. The result hoped for is an agreement among the parties as to the placement and custody of the child and the elements of the case plan designed to reunite the family. However, reunification is not the goal in all mediated cases; the goal is the safety and best interest of the child.

In 2002, 21 mediations were held in 15 cases; in 2003, 62 mediations were held in 44 cases; and through June 2004, 65 mediations were held between January 1 and July 19, 2004. The number of mediations has been increasing steadily, and we expect to mediate at least 100 cases in 2004. The average CAMP mediation lasts 4.5 hours. It is attended by the parents, the children, if age appropriate, the attorneys for the children, parents, Office of Community Services, and the District Attorney (Orleans Parish only), the OCS case manager, the Child Protection Investigator and their supervisors, the foster parents, the parents' families and other support persons, and any therapist or other professional that is deemed necessary. The largest mediation CAMP has held had 28 participants; the smallest had three.

Stakeholder feedback on CAMP has been positive. When asked, the stakeholders have said that a successful mediation is one in which all participants understood what services were needed for the best interest of the child and in which all participants could communicate with each other.

### **Barriers/Challenges Impacting Goal Attainment:**

Major accomplishments in the area of permanency for children over the past five years include the statewide implementation of Concurrent Planning and implementation of Level of Care in the Covington region. Both programs focus on permanency as the purpose is to place children in permanent placements, if possible. If this is not possible, a concurrent/alternate plan is considered. Bridge Homes and Adoptive Resource Homes have also been certified in each region and they have

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improved the Agency's move toward permanency with children.

Over the last five year planning cycle, the Agency has worked to reduce the number of placements a child experiences while in foster care. OCS has remained relatively stable in their compliance with this federal outcome indicator except in the results for the 2002-2003 State Fiscal Year (SFY). Statewide compliance obtained from the Agency's Peer Case Review (PCR) process, a process very similar to the federal CFSR, was rated at 74.3% indicating a figure much closer to the federal standard of 76.20% than the TIPS/AFCARS/NCANDS data. The Agency continues to work on this issue and it is included in the proposed Program Improvement Plan (PIP).

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## **Foster Care/Home Development:**

### **Goal 3:**

Well Being

### **Indicators:**

Timely completion of medical, dental and mental health services for children

### **Data Source/Progress Toward Goal:**

QA (1999 Medical 80.9%, Dental 72.1%); (2000 Medical 77.9%, Dental 72.3%); (2001 Medical 72.6%, Dental 84.5%); (2002 Medical 84.5%, Dental 70.7%

## **Performance/Achievement:**

Improved Compliance with Timely Medical/Dental Examinations – Corrective actions have been developed in 6 regions to address improving compliance in this area.

Developed Clinical Evaluation Program (CEP) – Developed and implemented in 2000.

Developed Process for Obtaining Mental Health Assessments for Children – Mental Health Assessment Screening Form developed in 2003.

## **Barriers/Challenges Impacting Goal Attainment:**

One of the major accomplishments in the area of well being over the period was the development of a Mental Health Screening Form that is used on all children when they enter foster care. A second major accomplishment includes the implementation of the CEP. This program is currently implemented in various regions with plans to expand throughout the State should the budget permit. The CEP is a managed care program for mental health services. CEP was not included in June 21, 2004 Louisiana legislative budget allocation.

Over the last five-year planning cycle, the Agency has worked to increase compliance with timely medical/dental examinations and mental health assessments. Numbers have fluctuated over the five years and the Agency is addressing this through both the current Peer Case Review and Quality Assurance (QA) systems. Regions were required to develop corrective action plans to improve compliance. On a quarterly basis, the Peer Case Review process captures medical, dental and mental health information.

### **Foster/Adoptive Family Diligent Recruitment Efforts**

The Agency has expended diligent efforts over the past five years in the area of recruitment of potential foster/adoptive homes. These efforts have been at both the regional and state levels.

In each of the 10 regions throughout the State, recruitment and retention plans were established on an annual basis. These plans included a needs assessment that targeted recruitment of foster and adoptive parents to meet the characteristics of children in the region. Regional funds were provided for the specific purpose of recruitment and retention of homes. These funds were used to pay for regional recruiters, newspaper ads, TV and radio spots, recruitment materials, purchase of home studies by private agencies, and refreshments at pre-service training orientation and training meetings. Within each region, Home Development staff also contracted with foster and adoptive parents to assist in recruitment. At local conferences, fairs and festivals, materials about fostering and adopting were made available.

In addition to regional activities, statewide activities are ongoing as well. Statewide recruitment efforts involved television spots showing the Governor encouraging families to adopt and foster, other television spots, statewide billboards and a new recruitment brochure were developed. Statewide funds were available to pay foster parents to serve as co-trainers for MAPP/GPS. Digital cameras were also purchased for each region so that pictures of our children could be included on the AdoptUSkids website for recruitment purposes.

Overall, the Agency is doing well in the area of recruitment. During the recent Child and Family Services Review, the State received a "Strength" rating in the area of recruitment of potential foster/adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the State for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed.

Factors contributing to the Agency's developments in this area have been:

- Since 1999, the Agency has made consistent and concerted efforts to assure that staff and foster parents were provided substantive training on MEPA/IEPA.
- The Agency has consistently used technology to make potential adoptive parents aware of the children available and awaiting adoption through the Louisiana Adoption Resource Exchange (LARE) website managed by the Adoption Exchange Association. Referrals received through this outreach effort include potential adoptive parents of racially and culturally diverse backgrounds.
- The Agency has recognized and capitalized upon the mutual goal it shares with faith-based organizations of assuring safe, permanent and loving homes for children awaiting adoption. Efforts to engage the faith-based community have included the use of National Child Welfare Resource Center training and technical assistance days to showcase the positive results obtained by Rev. W.C. Martin, Bishop Aaron Blake, and Michael Redden of Texas, and providing support, planning and preparation assistance for the Administration for Children and Youth's faith-based conference, "Building Adoption Families through Faith-Based Adoption" which was held in Shreveport in 2004. This conference served as a resource to interested parties from Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas.

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- The Agency has utilized Title IV-B subpart 2 funding to fully implement 30 family resource centers in every region of the state. The family resource centers enhance placement stability and support foster/adoptive parents through skill- and knowledge-based training, support, respite, and other post-adoptive services.
- The Agency has provided (and continues to provide) adoption subsidies to adoptive parents who are willing to provide permanent, safe, and loving homes for special needs children and youth.

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### 1.1.D Adoption

**Goal:** Permanency

**Indicators:** Increase in number of children adopted; number of children freed for adoption; adoption within 24 months of latest removal; length of time to achieve adoption

**Data Source/Progress Toward Goal:** TIPS/AFCARS/PCR - (2002 - 13.13%); (PCR-SFY 2002-2003 – 32.7%); (2003 – 18.1%); (2004 – 22.2%)

### **Performance/Achievement:**

**National and State Adoption Exchanges:** Links were created with Adopt US Kids; ongoing use of exchanges to facilitate adoptive placement of children.

**Increased Number of Certified Families:** Currently, the Agency has 2000 dually certified homes plus an additional 500 certified adoptive families. In 1999, the Agency had approximately 2500 foster and dually certified families plus and additional 1000 certified adoptive homes. (See page 5 of Section 1.)

**Utilized Marketing and Media:** Newspaper, television and radio campaigns were organized through regional recruiter contracts.

**Maintained & Improved Louisiana Adoption Resource Exchange (LARE):** Children available for adoption continue to be listed on LARE for recruitment purposes. This FFY (October 2003 through September 2004), 456 adoptions were finalized with a total of 61 via LARE. Use of “purchase of services” contracts has proven an effective aide in expediting adoptions, most especially in interstate placements. Of the 456 finalized adoptions for FFY 2003 – 2004, 17 involved purchase of service contracts for child specific adoptive placement.

**Studied and Piloted Family Group Decision Making:** Implemented in Baton Rouge Region in February 2003. A strength based model of case planning utilizes extended family and friends in the resolution of problems. The Discovery Center funded by Title IVE, Part 2 Funds, is the lead contractor for these services. (See page 9 of this Section for a summary of the available data on this model.)

**Worked with Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA):** OCS collaborated statewide with CASA to ensure the best possible outcomes for children in the custody of the State. CASA has 14 programs with all regions having at least one program and the Shreveport, Alexandria, and Covington Regions having more than one program.

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Monitored Compliance through Quality Assurance Reviews & Peer Case Reviews: Ongoing review of data generated from both processes; corrective actions implemented as issues were identified.

Improved Criminal Record Guidelines: Criminal record clearances, including fingerprinting, are done on all prospective foster/adoptive home applicants (and members of their household that are 18 years or older). Both state and national clearances are also conducted on existing certified homes where there is reason to believe a family member may have been involved in adult criminal behavior since the initial certification. Fingerprinting equipment has been installed in each region to expedite clearances. Delays have been minimized.

Worked with Courts and District Attorneys: Court and District Attorney representation on the Safe Act Task Force and the Children's Advocacy Resource Efforts (CARE) project.

Implemented Concurrent Planning: Statewide implementation completed in March 2001.

MEPA/IEPA Training: Completed in May, 2001; now interwoven in training curriculum; also trained during CFSR training.

Contracted with Out-of-State Adoption Agencies: OCS continues to contract with out-of-state agencies for child specific recruitment for adoptive placements. In 2000, Louisiana had 45 contracts; in 2001, 35 contracts; in 2002, 45 contracts; and, 42 contracts in 2003.

Kinship Care Subsidy Program: Policy issued in May 1999. Brochures outlining the program were issued by DSS/Office of Family Support.

Increased Post Adoption Services: Foster/Adoptive Family Resource Centers offer services statewide as well as through contracts with individual providers. Additional respite services have also been provided through an adoption respite grant.

Conducted Exchange Meetings: The Agency conducted and/or arranged ongoing exchange meetings held semiannually. Exchange meetings are conducted by Agency staff to match children with available homes.

Training: Ongoing formal, professional training of staff in adoption issues. In 2003 staff was trained in use of Adopt US kids website and services.

Recruitment and Retention of Foster/Adoptive Families: Monitored through state/regional recruitment/retention plans/reports.

Adoption 2002 Initiative: Numerous initiatives completed to double the number of adoptions (ex. review of child specific recruitment plans and annual adoption celebrations, etc.)

Adoption Incentive Awards: The agency has received adoption incentive awards based on the number of finalized adoptions. Funding has been utilized for recruitment initiatives, the



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purchase of in-state and out-of-state services from private licensed adoption agencies, training of staff, additional post-adoption services, adoption exchange meetings and celebrations, staff participation in national adoption conferences, compensation for staff overtime and the purchase of equipment and materials.

Quality Reviews: The Adoption Program has been the subject in 10 Peer Case Reviews (in SFY 2003) and seven Peer Case Reviews (in SFY 2004). Also, the Quality Assurance (QA 1) reviews have been held involving the following number of cases:

FFY 99-00	FFY 00-01	FFY 01-02	FFY 02-03	FFY 03-04
3845	2385	1621	1463	1620

Significant yearly differences in the number of reviews may reflect sample size (FC/AD QA1), as some regions were granted permission to not conduct reviews and/or the regions had involvement in the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR).

### **Barriers/Challenges Impacting Goal Attainment:**

OCS strives to increase the number of adoptions and reduce the length of time to achieve permanency. Louisiana has worked to improve compliance with this indicator over the last five years and has steadily increased the number of finalized adoptions. From FFY 1999-2000 to FFY 2002-2003 the Agency finalized 2,036 adoptions. Louisiana has 4,288 children in its public foster care system (March 15, 2004). Of that number, 595 are legally available for adoption and 280 of these children are registered with the Louisiana Adoption Resource Exchange (LARE) photo listing Internet site, [www.adoptuskids.org/states/la/](http://www.adoptuskids.org/states/la/) and the new Children's Bureau Internet site, [www.adoptuskids.org](http://www.adoptuskids.org). Of the 280 children listed on LARE, 183 (65.4%) are males; 97 (34.6%) are females; 71 (25.3%) are white; 203 (72.5%) are African American; 6 (2.1%) are multiracial; 77 (27.5%) are members of a sibling group; and 229 are deemed physically, emotionally, or intellectually challenged. In 2003, with 97 placements, Louisiana had the fifth highest number in the nation of placements of children registered on Adopt US Kids.

Despite the Agency's efforts to recruit foster/adoptive families, one of the barriers to adoptive placement is the lack of adoptive resources. While monitoring the certifications of foster/adoptive families, the agency discovered that the number of certified homes provided in 1999 (2500 foster and dually certified families and an additional 1000 adoptive families) was an inflated number. This was due to a computer programming error that included certified adoptive homes that had previously adopted a child but whose homes were open only for subsidy payments. In addition to this programming issue, there was incorrect information in the data system. Staff worked with Home Development Units statewide to close foster homes that were not being used and to refer families who wished to adopt young Caucasian children to private agencies since OCS does not have a need for adoptive homes for this type of child. The Agency has been working diligently to get corrected statistics on the number of foster and adoptive homes. Although the numbers contained in this report (2000 foster and dually certified families and 500 adoptive families in 2004) indicate a decrease in the number of certified foster and

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adoptive homes, the Agency believes that we have the same numbers of families available for placement; however, the Agency has not been able to expand the total number of certified foster/adoptive families.

Additional barriers that may have contributed to delays in the adoptive process include:

- Interagency transfer of cases from foster care to adoption within 30 days of child being available for adoption.
- Lack of documentation of search, assessment and reassessment of relatives throughout the life of the case.
- Court Delays
- Time frames for completed Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) Packets
- Irregular statewide compliance with dual certification of foster/adoptive families
- Lack of conformity of appropriate language in instant orders regarding IV-E eligibility.
- Need for strengthened agency subsidy approval process.
- Possible inadequacy in definition of special needs.

A work group has been organized which will identify barriers to achieving timely adoptions and develop strategies for improving compliance. This item is included in the proposed Program Improvement Plan (PIP).

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**Finalized Adoptions (1999 – 2004)**

The chart below depicts the number of adoptions finalized in federal fiscal years 1999-2000 through 2003-2004. During this time frame, the Agency finalized 2137 adoptions. (Note: the data for the 2003-2004 fiscal year is not complete because the data was not available at the time of this report.)

Region	Number of Adoptions FFY 2000	Number of Adoptions FFY 2001	Number of Adoptions FFY 2002	Number of Adoptions FFY 2003	Number of Adoptions 4 <sup>th</sup> QTR FFY 2003 1 <sup>st</sup> QTR FFY 2004
Orleans	120	51	28	41	25
Baton Rouge	49	54	46	30	10
Thibodaux	25	19	19	14	11
Lafayette	47	75	96	89	36
Lake Charles	28	38	39	45	18
Alexandria	39	44	51	75	21
Shreveport	23	42	40	54	25
Monroe	27	25	28	31	12
Covington	53	67	77	84	45
Jefferson	67	54	48	37	15
Statewide Total	478	469	472	500	218

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### Adoption Finalization Data

The chart below represents statewide adoption data beginning in fiscal year 1999-2000 through 2003-2004. (Note: Data for the 03-04 fiscal year is not complete due to the time frame for completion of this report.)

Categories	FFY 2000	FFY 2001	FFY 2002	FFY 2003	4 <sup>th</sup> QTR FFY 2003 1 <sup>st</sup> QTR FFY 2004
# Children Finalized	477	469	475	500	218
Average Time to Free (TPR)	2.79 yrs	2.62 yrs	2.13 yrs	2.09 yrs	1.91 yrs
Average Time to Sign 427	1.28 yrs	1.22 yrs	1.16 yrs	1.16 yrs	1.11 yrs
Average Time to Finalization	.24 yrs (2.9 months)	.28 yrs (3.4 months)	.24 yrs (2.9 months)	.29 yrs (3.5 months)	.30 yrs (3.6 months)
Average Time of Length of Time in Care	4.33 yrs	4.14 yrs	3.94 yrs	3.54 yrs	3.35 yrs
Average Age of Children Finalized	7.53	7.72	7.28	7.01	7.07

The average age of a child adopted through OCS was 7.32 years. The average length of time to free a child for adoption has gone from 2.79 years (1999-2000) to 2.10 years (2003-2004). Children freed for adoption have spent an average of 3.50 years in care prior to adoption finalization. Overall, the Agency has done an outstanding job of providing permanency to children by increasing the number of children who are adopted. The Agency continues to finalize adoptions and to work toward finalizing adoptions within 24 months of the child's latest entry to foster care.

**Average Time to Free:** Time period from the date the child entered care and the date the child became legally free for adoption.

**Average Time to Sign 427-B:** Time period from the date the child is legally free to the date the child's case opened in the Adoption Subsidy Program

**Average Time to Finalization:** Time period from signing of 427B and actual date finalized.

**Average Time in Care:** Time period between the child entering care and time of finalization

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### Agency's/Court System Capacity to Process Termination of Parental Rights (TPR)

The chart below contains information on the number of TPR reported for the 2000-2004 Consolidated Child and Family Services Plan. The data, gathered in April of each year, indicates the number of TPR's the agency has filed. For the 2000-2004 State Fiscal Years (SFY) reporting period, the chart depicts the number of TPR's filed in each region as well as statewide totals.

Region	2001 SFY 7/00-3/01	2002 SFY 7/01-3/02	2003 SFY 7/02-3/03	2004 SFY 4/03-3/04	2000-2004 Final Report Totals
Orleans	0	21	12	43	76
Baton Rouge	14	13	9	22	58
Thibodaux	0	6	3	11	20
Lafayette	35	73	34	39	181
Lake Charles	15	17	26	17	75
Alexandria	25	36	33	28	122
Shreveport	23	24	11	18	76
Monroe	18	16	22	28	84
Covington	46	44	39	46	175
Jefferson	0	22	18	23	63
Statewide	176	272	207	275	930

Note: "TPR's joined" refers to the Agency joining a foster parent who has initiated termination proceedings independently. In SFY 2001, SFY 2003 and SFY 2004 foster parents did not initiate termination proceedings; however, in SFY 2002 the agency joined in four TPR's initiated by foster parents.

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### Adoption Incentive Awards Fiscal Years 2000-2004

Adoption incentive payments were allocated for use in initiatives to encourage more adoptions of foster children to promote efficiencies in the adoption process. Funding was utilized for the following initiatives:

- Purchase of in-state and out-of-state services with private licensed adoption agencies.
- Statewide recruitment initiatives.
- Regional recruiter contracts.
- Adoption training opportunities and continued education.
- Post adoption services to children, adoptive families and birth parents.
- Additional or temporary staff, overtime compensation, and/or equipment or materials.
- Annual adoption celebration and on-going adoption exchanges.
- Staff attendance at the North American Council on Adoptable Children Conference.

The amount of Adoption Incentive Awards granted to Louisiana are as follows:

FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR	AMOUNT
2000	\$109,275
2001	\$397,202
2002	\$447,408
2003	\$0
2004	\$172,000

### Inter-Country Adoption

The Office of Community Services continued to implement the Inter-country Adoption Act of 2000 (ICAA) by providing post-adoptive services to adoptive families who adopt a child from another country. The services included case management services, post-adoptive counseling services (funded through post adoptive grants) and services provided through statewide Foster/Adoptive Family Resource Centers. The access points for services were the same for families who have adopted internationally as well as for families who adopted a child(ren) from within the State.

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## **Child 1**

Child 1 was adopted from Romania. He was later taken into the custody of the Department of Corrections, Office of Youth Development due to a charge of simple battery. The child was then discharged from two residential programs due to negative behavior. On June 23, 2001, child 1 was placed in the custody of OCS. Child 1 is currently residing in a residential facility. A foster care worker in the Baton Rouge Region is handling his case. The goal for child 1 is to return home.

## **Child 2**

Child 2 was adopted from Romania. He entered care on November 12, 1999 in the Covington Region. His adoptive parents surrendered their rights on that day. Child 2 is currently placed with an adoptive family; however, the family is wavering on their commitment to adopt. Child 2 has been diagnosed with Separation/Attachment Disorder.

**1.2 Staff Training:**

The 2000 – 2004 Consolidated Child and Family Services Plan described eight broad goal statements that were targeted for action over the course of the ensuing five-year period. A great amount of progress has been made in each goal area. These are summarized as follows:

**Goal 1:** *To Implement the Competency-Based and Performance Based Model*

**Performance/Achievement:**

Develop and issue on regular basis to agency managers and supervisors, a staff development catalog: The initial edition of the catalog was developed, printed, and distributed during the first year of the CFSP. In May 2000, six of the regions had received a site visit to review the progress on the objective and the catalog. By June 2001, all site visits to provide catalog information to the regions had been completed. The catalog provides course offerings, legal mandates, an explanation of the competency based model, and other information to help guide supervisory decision making regarding training. The catalog is updated and reissued each year. Staff development is viewed by OCS as an ongoing process that requires annual updating to assure its relevance to federal and state law and best practices.

Six steps to professionalism have been formed to guide overall training and staff development:

- Supervisory Orientation to the Job;
- New Worker Curriculum;
- Supervisory On the Job Instruction;
- Job Specialized Basic curriculum and other Core Curricula;
- Learning Initiatives, Ongoing Supervisory Development and Conferences/Workshops;
- Specialized Learning Initiatives Professional Conferences/Workshops.

OCS added “Ethics at Work” as a regularly conducted training by June of 2003. This reinforced the Agency’s adopted Code of Ethics, which was based on the Illinois model of ethical practice guidelines for child welfare workers. This also increased the Agency’s compliance with Council on Accreditation standards requiring such training. Other trainings developed, presented, and added to the training catalog by June 2003 were:

- “CPR for Family and Friends”
- “Heartsaver First Aid Course” (offered through the American Heart Association)
- “Louisiana Standardized Child Passenger Safety Awareness Program” (offered through partnership with the Louisiana Highway Safety Commission)
- “Bloodborne Pathogens Training Course – Outline”
- “Preventing Sexual Harassment”



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- “Documentation Training”
- “Lifebooks”
- “Adoption Assessor Training – Tier 1”,
- “Cultural Competence – Differences: Building Bridges or Walls” (developed in collaboration with the National Resource Center for Youth Services, University of Oklahoma and through funding with a Title IV-E University Partnership. A train the trainers was held).
- “Transcultural Parenting: Love is Not Enough”
- “Adoption Assessor Training – Tier II”
- “Council on Accreditation”
- “Child and Family Services Review (CFSR).”

Improve partnership with management and supervisors statewide to enhance transfer of learning: A significant component of meeting with staff was to review the Training and Staff Development Catalog to enhance an ongoing partnership with agency management and supervision staff. This occurred with the issuance of the Training and Staff Development Catalog. All meetings occurred by the end of October 2000.

Contract with nationally recognized expert of Child Welfare Supervision to deliver a course on the educational role of the supervision: An identified need of the organization was to increase the recognition of the importance of the supervisor to staff development, acknowledging that there is no way that classroom based training alone can suffice for expanding the knowledge base of staff. In recognition of this defined need, an instructor was sought to develop and deliver a series of courses to managers and supervisors state wide by November 1999. Nationally known trainers, Marsha Salus and Marge Gildner, were contracted by June 2000 for this task. Course presentations on the Educational Role of the Supervisor and the Supportive Role of the Supervisor were developed and were made to staff by June of 2001. These courses are offered as requested by statewide staff. The trainings, along with the available in state resources of the Comprehensive Public Training Program and that of the state Civil Service, provide managers and supervisors with quality management instruction and supervisory skills. All summarized curriculum areas continue to be provided to staff in supervisory roles.

Promote and provide management courses for agency managers and supervisors through state Comprehensive Public Training (CPTP) Program: CPTP is a valuable resource that supported the attainment of this goal in training. Staff awareness of this resource, was done in statewide presentation meetings. Ongoing work with CPTP program staff to develop and influence curriculum that meets agency staff’s needs was completed. The OCS Training Section stays in close contact with CPTP training. Training Section staff are designated as the CPTP/OCS Liaison to better facilitate and track registration for the classes. Four functional certificates are awarded to the successful candidate who completes CPTP classes:

- Building Effective Teams
- Managing People
- Managing Work

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- Advanced Managerial Skills

In 2002, a videotape explaining the process of CPTP training, the courses and program changes, was sent to each regional office.

Examine current curriculum to determine a direct relationship between job tasks, competencies, learning content and performance indicators: A staff task force was sought to promote and complete this objective. Meetings began in May and July 2000. Significant recommendations were made which added the new performance based model to the Staff Development Catalog. Learning objectives were reframed to reflect performance indicators, with emphasis on what workers were expected to accomplish in their jobs. This occurred in 2001. The outcome of this effort was a series of competencies that are termed basic, intermediate, and advanced. Learning initiatives were proposed with specific courses tied to one of the three levels of competencies. This model continues to be in effect and supports the goals and objectives of the Agency.

**Goal 2:** To Provide Core Curriculum to Welfare Staff on an ongoing bases.

### **Performance/Achievement:**

To provide basic level core curriculum to new child welfare staff in an effort to equip them with the basic competencies needed to do their job: On an as needed basis each year, basic level core curriculum courses are provided. Courses such as “Introduction to Child Protective Services” and “Physical Indicators of Child Maltreatment” are presented in four to six week intervals eight times annually.

To provide basic to intermediate level curriculum to new and experienced child welfare staff: Intermediate Level Sessions are provided numerous times per year. Courses such as: “Early Child Development Applications” are provided 4 times per year as needed while other courses such as “Sexually Transmitted Diseases” are given six to eight times per year.

To provide intermediate level curriculum to child welfare staff: Intermediate level courses include such classes as “Substance Abuse: Working with the Family” which is offered four times per year or as needed; “Cultural Insight” which is offered four time per year or as needed; “HIV/AIDS Awareness” offered four times per year. Training records indicate that in one year, 1999-2000, there were nearly 1,000 (989) participants trained in “Sexually Transmitted Diseases”.

To provide advanced level curriculum to child welfare staff through professional Welfare Conferences and Workshops: Regional training budgets were established for use by the regional offices to expand opportunities for staff to attend advanced training and workshops. Staff were allowed, through these budgets, to attend in-state and out-of-state conferences each year. The regional training budgets were also used for foster parents to attend certain conferences.

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The Child Welfare League of America provided a 'train the trainer' session for Independent Living coordinators in April 2001 and a Youth Conference was held in June 2000. Overall, there are 26 different in and out-of-state conferences which staff were engaged in annually over the course of the CFSP.

**Goal 3:** **Provide staff support courses that address the stressful nature of front line work in Child Welfare.**

### **Performance/Achievement:**

Develop and provide to regional staff a 'train the trainer' course on identification of critical incidents and formalized methods of addressing staff needs: Initial efforts were focused on exploring appropriate training resources on response and recovery and to make recommendations on training and proper procedures. A training outline and agenda was developed by June 2000. In 2001, action on this activity was deferred while refinement of the training expectations and training package was done internally.

Contract with consultants to deliver training to front line staff and supervisors on post-traumatic stress syndrome in child welfare: Training was developed and delivered to staff by June 2000. This training curriculum is incorporated into the training catalog. A five-hour course entitled "Stress Management" is offered to staff statewide.

**Goal 4:** Provide pre-service certification to home development staff and in-service training to foster and adoptive parents.

### **Performance/Achievement:**

**Assess the current foster parent pre-service training to determine if it is the appropriate and effective curriculum for preparing parents for fostering adopting our children:** In 1999, a task force was convened to review this objective. Curriculum was reviewed with a target of making recommendations to the Assistant Secretary by January 2001. Changes to the current pre service for foster and adoptive parents were to be made by January 2002. The task force made the recommendation to retain the Model Approach to Positive Parenting (MAPP)/GPS and to purchase the packet for continued use. This continues to be the model the Agency uses for pre-service for foster and adoptive parents.

Ongoing Pre-service certification training to equip home development staff with the knowledge and skills to present pre-service training to prospective foster/adoptive parents: MAPP/GPS certification training has been offered annually. This will likely be a continuing objective for the forthcoming CFSP for 2005-2009.

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**Goal 5:** To enhance learning systems to include a variety of instructional experiences which utilize the newest technologies.

### **Performance/Achievement:**

Develop a system for conducting distance learning in every region and in state office:

Equipment for long distance learning was obtained in June 2001. Overall, the Agency has studied and considered a major initiative to assist staff with enhanced learning systems that reflect today's opportunities to further develop their ability to perform on the job, provide for their professional development and keep them closer to their workstations. To that end, the following learning system enhancements are planned:

- Computer Based Instruction – including web-based instruction available at the keyboard of any worker.
- Good Practice Forums – accreditation through the Council on Accreditation focuses on good practice; also, there are monthly “Keep In Touch” (KIT) Video conferences.
- Child Welfare Certifications – This was aimed at promoting participation in the curriculum and rewarding performance of learned principles. However, a change in priorities requiring in-depth study and development and staff turnover has resulted in this being deferred.
- Mentors Program – This initiative started in June 2002, creates a regional and statewide system whereby mentors from within OCS are developed. Part of this was the upgrade of 70 positions to advanced level positions. A 12 hour training was provided to staff involved in this program on leadership, change and conflict, collaboration, ethics, systems thinking, and motivation. A specialized internship in state office, Division of Field Services, was also put in place and four staff were selected to participate. This leadership development involved training, quarterly focus groups, and a special focus on funding issues, human resource functions, and leadership development.

Develop Computer-based Instruction (CBI) for use over agency LAN: The Agency opted to use video conferencing as a method to create a distance learning environment until a Computer-Based Instruction provider could be located. The above mentioned monthly KIT video conferences are an example of the use of this mode of communication. Also considered in 2001 was the utilization of web based computer based instruction. The target for developing the CBI conversion of agency workbooks will be dependent on continuing support of the state Division of Administration (DOA), especially for expansion. A change in administering the Agency's information management occurred in 2002 with the merging of the OCS Information Management Unit with the Department of Social Services Information Technology Division. This may effect how future developments in this area occur.

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Plan and conduct “Good Practice Forums” using existing OCS staff and foster parents as presenters and facilitated by staff development instructors: These were initially targeted to occur in January 2001 for agency staff and January 2002 for foster parents and supervisors, both to be followed by annual Good Practice Forums. The activity for staff was deferred until the next planning cycle due to the Agency being involved in accreditation activities that reflect good practices and quality service delivery in many areas of agency functioning. Foster parents held their first summit early in the FFY 2001.

Develop Special Certifications for staff who complete specified instruction and activities: A certification board within OCS was envisioned which would determine requirements and policies. This was targeted for January 2003, while policies and procedures were targeted by January 2004. The first award certificates were targeted for after January 2004 as staff met requirements. Beginning in 2002, OCS experienced several factors which caused this objective to be tabled indefinitely: (1) other critical priorities emerged requiring staff time, e.g., accreditation activities, preparations for the CFSR, and, (2) the training section and staff statewide experienced staff turnover and hiring freezes. These factors prevented the necessary in-depth development of this initiative for the foreseeable future.

Develop within OCS a Mentoring Program to help develop the expertise of less experienced staff with leadership potential: OCS started work on this objective by exploring existing mentoring programs nationwide in January 2002. It was envisioned that a model for a mentoring program would be developed by January 2003, with implementation to occur in January 2004. By Federal Fiscal Year 2001, Phase I of the leadership training was to be offered and scheduled in June and November. On a related track, a succession initiative was started with four mid-level management staff serving “internships” in the Division of Field Services in OCS state office. OCS also progressed on this objective by having 70 existing worker positions upgraded to the Specialists 3 level, reflecting an administrative position where more advanced practitioners would be postured to assist with the mentoring processes. These new positions included responsibilities for mentoring new workers. In addition, staff statewide who were interested in a new leadership initiative applied and a limited number were selected by their Regional Administrator and the Assistant Secretary of OCS to participate. A training on leadership ensued for these staff.

### **Goal 6:**

To Enhance and Modernize the Computerized Training Tracking System to Improve Performance and to Enhance its Functioning to Include Other Aspects of the Training Process.

### **Performance/Achievement:**

Move current trainings Tracking Database System (TDS) into an updated database format: It was envisioned that work would begin with the Information Management staff on selection of the most appropriate database in January 2000, with a contract provider to move the current system to the new database software by July 2000. By June 2000, OCS was in the process of testing the system, with an estimated 90% of the program being complete. The new program was up and

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running in the new software environment. There were some technical delays in the June 2001 implementation. This tracking system was to be multifaceted: tracking not only the OCS delivered training, but training received from administrative and/or supervisory staff and from other sources. Formal OCS training was to be keyed into the system from attendance logs that were the official records of the training. Reports were to be produced by the system on all training activities. Individual records of training accomplishments were to be easily produced for use in worker licensing activities and for staff training requirements for child placing agencies.

Develop automated scheduling system in the new software format: Work on the scheduling system was to occur starting with the tracking system in January 2000. The program began testing in May 2000. By June 2001, the process was completed; registration and scheduling of training was at capacity in TDS.

Integrate software for automatic tracking of computer based instruction in tracking system: The original CFSP indicated that OCS would explore management software that successfully integrated with tracking database software by January 2000, with purchase and installation of new software by January 2001. The software is still in the pilot stage; the software has not been purchased.

Integrate tracking software with OCS Intranet to allow staff access to training records: Under the new TDS, regional training coordinators will be able to retrieve training records. This achievement assisted with, several Council on Accreditation requirements relating to training record keeping practices within the organization. The capacity to accomplish this is being developed in the ACCESS system.

**Goal 7:** To Continue the Agency/University Collaborative Partnership Child Welfare Training and curriculum Programs with each of the Seven Participating State Universities.

### **Performance/Achievement:**

University Social Work Programs prepare graduates for competent child welfare practice: The model program, Child Welfare Training and Curriculum Project developed by Louisiana State University in 1993-1994 was expanded to incorporate other state universities. OCS developed and continued to expand Title IV-E training contracts with all seven state university schools and departments of social work for development and enhancement of their child welfare curriculum to prepare future graduates for practice in Child Protection, Family Services, Foster Care, Home Development and Adoption programs within the Agency. The initial activities included a goal to contract with each university by July 1999, provide for organization of OCS internships in local parish offices, and amend contracts as needed. In 2000, contracts were finalized with Louisiana State University, Southern University at New Orleans, and Grambling University; each had a

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contract expiration date of 2002. The budgets for the Title IV-E Child Welfare Training and Curriculum Development Program are as follows:

- FY 1998-1999 \$ 942,292
- FY 1999-2000 \$1,069,720
- FY 2000-2001 \$1,069,720
- FY 2001-2002 \$1,069,720
- FY 2002-2003 \$1,354,172
- FY 2003-2004 \$1,628,812 (increase due to Positive Youth Development Training)

OCS announced availability of stipends for OCS employees in April 2000. Supervision of the contracts is provided by the Training and Staff Development Section of the Agency. These stipends continued during the 2000 – 2004 period.

Attract, train, and retain qualified employees in OCS: A contractor was hired in 2001 to assist in coordinating Title IV-E training activities. The number of stipends awarded increased through FFY 2000, from 25 BSW's and 17 MSW's to 16 BSW's and 29 MSW stipends. The stipend program also assisted OCS in achievement of accreditation by adding the number of MSW staff across the State. Tuition reimbursement was added to further assist worker-students in acquiring the MSW Degree. It is estimated that the Agency invests over \$60,000 in employees who receive the MSW Degree. Staff can qualify for tuition reimbursement even if working as a part-time student. A total of 23 staff persons' books, tuition and fees were paid by OCS and/or with Title IV-E funding. By the end of June 2003, 52 OCS staff were students at MSW universities on part time tuition support from OCS; 10 OCS staff attended MSW universities full time during the year, and, of these, 10 were full time Title IV-E stipend recipients, 9 were full time with a combination of Adoption Incentive Funding and Title IV-E funds.

Focus on serving families with multiple needs: The beginning activity regarding this objective was to include a review of university child welfare curriculum for emphasis on serving families with multiple needs, promote student internships in OCS offices, and for OCS staff to guest lecture in classes when invited. Interns were designated in every region by June 2000 and staff has served as guest lecturers on child welfare issues. OCS Trainers and Title IV-E contractor will continue work with universities to emphasize services to families with multiple needs.

Promote collaborative efforts between OCS and the state schools and departments of social work: The initial objective focused on contracting with each university by July 1999, setting up the stipend selection criteria, assuring that each university was providing child welfare emphasis in curriculum offerings, providing an orientation to the Title IV-E Child Welfare Project to all universities, establishing an organized internship process for staff eligible for internships, and, having OCS serve as guest lecturers.

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**Goal 8:** To Continue agency/LSU and SUNO University Partnerships in staff development and to provide interested and qualifying employees the opportunity to pursue the MSW degree to improve staff knowledge, skill and ability to improve client service delivery

**Performance/Achievement:**

Provide opportunities on a competitive basis for up to 10 employees each year to receive OCS stipends with 75% salary and full educational leave for up to two years: The objective's activities involved setting up selection criteria and updating legally binding stipend contracts. This involved convening a selection committee to make recommendations in June of each year and to conduct end of semester interviews with stipend recipients.

Provide opportunities on a competitive basis each year for selected employees to receive OCS tuition reimbursement to attend school on a part time basis: Under this goal, regional tuition budgets were set, selection criteria were established, regional oversight/review was established to include monitoring of grades. Each of these activities are carried out annually, usually in June of each year.

**Goal 9:** Training and utilization of paraprofessionals

**Performance/Achievement:**

Hiring of low income persons for paraprofessional positions: By June 2002, the Agency was successful in presenting compelling information to Civil Service that resulted in an upgrade for a paraprofessional staff position. The title changed to Social Services Child Welfare Service Assistant. Two levels are developed to allow for a beginner-in-training concept and an advanced level. In 2003, through the Title IV-E Partnership, the Agency offered customer services training to clerical staff. (Clerical staff were active with the move of the Agency to achieve accreditation, and their role has expanded in providing their viewpoints and expertise to the accreditation effort, in non-secretarial ways.)



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**1.3 Promoting Safe and Stable Families**

**Goals:** Safety, Permanency & Well-Being

**Indicators:** Increase in community based continuum of family support and family preservation services

**Data Source/Progress Toward Goal:** Database for Resource Centers; TIPS Reports; Monthly Monitoring Reports; 2000 LSU Evaluation Report

**Performance/Achievement:**

Expanded Contracts with Centers: Currently, there are 30 resource centers operating statewide through multi-year contracts. Centers provide numerous services including respite, supervised family visitation, information, referral and advocacy, parenting classes, psychotherapy, support groups and training. OCS has maintained the contracts that provide funding for the resource centers; there has been no expansion with regard to these contracts due to a lack of funding.

Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program Family Resource Centers

Foster and Adoptive Family Resource Centers	Region	SFY 03 – 04 Number of Clients Served	
VOA – Greater New Orleans	Orleans		**
VOA – Greater Baton Rouge	Baton Rouge		**
Bayou Land Families Helping Families	Thibodaux	2	*
The Extra Mile, Inc.	Lafayette		**
Educational & Treatment Council (REST)	Lake Charles		**
VOA – North Louisiana (The Lighthouse)	Alexandria		**
Community Support Programs	Shreveport	212	
Community Support Programs	Shreveport	2	
Project Celebration	Shreveport	127	
ULM – Family Connections	Monroe		**
New Horizons Youth Service Bureau (Positive Steps)	Covington	630	
Family Services of Greater New Orleans (Family Matters)	Jefferson	15	*

\*FAFRCs’ counts are low because these centers began using database effective January 2004.

\*\*Data unavailable because counts have not been entered into database system.

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Child Welfare Family Resource Centers	Region	SFY 03 – 04 Number of Clients Served
VOA – Greater New Orleans	Orleans	19
VOA – Greater New Orleans	Orleans	89
Southeastern Louisiana University (Discovery)	Baton Rouge	540
Kingsley House	Thibodaux	66
Nicholls State University Dept. of Family & Consumer Science	Thibodaux	184
The Extra Mile, Inc. (Iberia)	Lafayette	6
The Extra Mile, Inc. (Opelousas)	Lafayette	15
Beauregard Community Action Association (Evolving Circles)	Lake Charles	25
Educational & Treatment Council (RSRC)	Lake Charles	33
VOA – North Louisiana (Alexandria/Leesville)	Alexandria	91
VOA – North Louisiana (Jena)	Alexandria	99
Community Support Programs	Shreveport	212
Project Celebration	Shreveport	127
ULM – Family Matters	Monroe	9
ULM – Family Ties (Delhi)	Monroe	4
New Horizons Youth Service Bureau (Positive Steps)	Covington	630
Family Services of Greater New Orleans (Real Alternatives)	Jefferson	62
Family Services of Greater New Orleans (Horizons Unlimited)	Jefferson	85

Data Collection: A database was created for use by OCS and resource centers for collection of information. Users can obtain demographic information; the number and types of services provided and outcome data.

Monitored Contracts and Provided Assistance to Providers/Contractors: Ongoing monitoring occurs through regional liaisons and state office and use of monthly monitoring reports. Evaluation of the resource centers was completed by LSU in 2000. Evaluation for the current contract period is planned to begin during September 2004.

In-Home Services and Post-Adoption Case Management: Services were offered through Foster/Adoptive Family Resource Centers and contracts with individual providers. Major services provided included psychotherapy, parenting and mentoring.

Developed Louisiana Advocacy Support Teams (LAST): The LAST team is operated out of the Monroe Regional Foster/Adoptive Child Welfare Resource Center. Support is available to foster and adoptive parents who are dealing with allegations of abuse and neglect.

Implementation of The Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) Model: Staff attended training on FGDM and the model is being piloted in the Baton Rouge Region. The Agency would like to implement the model in other areas of the State and worked with a Lafayette Regional Foster/Adoptive Family Resource Center to apply for a grant to fund this initiative. The resource center was not awarded the grant and the agency lacks funding for implementation in additional areas of the State.

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Developed Programs to Strengthen Marriage: The Knapsack project was implemented in 29 of the Foster/Adoptive Family Resource Centers. The project provides intervention focused on relationship building and maintenance. Training on strengthening marriages was provided to Foster/Adoptive Family Resource Center Staff and Agency staff representatives, including contract monitors, on May 3-5, 2004.

Completed Needs Assessment (by LSU) with OCS and Office of Addictive Disorders (OAD) Staff: A telephone survey completed in December 1999. Both agencies continue to collaborate and have attended joint trainings.

Implemented Infant Team Assessment Model: Implementation continues in Jefferson and Orleans Regions.

Used Preventive Assistance and Reunification Assistance Funds: The Agency continues to administer funds to ensure the safety, permanency and well-being of children and families. The funds provide “basics of living” needs and assistance for out of home placement and families being prepared for reunification.

Legal Contracts to Assist with TPR Backlog: Ongoing contracts with attorneys continue.

Recruitment Initiatives: State and regional recruitment/retention plans are developed annually by state office and regions.

Developed Bridge Homes: Completed in 2002. These homes are designed to provide temporary placement to children while they move from foster care to adoption.

Implemented Healthy Start Services: Services for first time parents continue to be offered in Shreveport Region only. This prevention program provides parenting skills.

Community Collaboration: Consumer/stakeholder participation is achieved via OCS committee structure, program improvement plan workgroups, and other special initiatives such as collaboration with OFS on the Healthy Marriages, Fatherhood Initiative.

### **Barriers/Challenges Impacting Goal Attainment:**

The Agency has contracted with 15 providers to operate 30 Foster/Adoptive Family Resource Centers statewide. There are 11 Foster and Adoptive Resource Centers and 19 are Child Welfare Resource Centers. From October 1999 through September 30, 2003 an average of 2,111 clients have been served annually in the resource centers. These community-based centers are funded by Title IV-B, Subpart 2 funds with the required match provided by the resource centers.

Other services in the community-based continuum of care include the development of the Louisiana Advocacy Support Team (LAST), piloting of Family Group Decision Making and the ongoing implementation of the infant teams. LAST volunteers are foster parents trained to help other foster parents deal with allegations of abuse and neglect. Foster parents are able to access

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LAST volunteers at the Monroe Regional resource center or via a toll free number. The Agency continues to pilot the Family Group Decision Making Model in the Baton Rouge Region. Expansion is not possible at this time due to limited funding. In addition, the Infant Teams in Jefferson and Orleans Parishes continue to provide services to families in that area.

During this planning cycle, the Agency has been successful in increasing the community-based continuum of family support and family preservation services. The biggest achievement has been in developing and administering contracts for maintenance of resource centers. Factors affecting the success of the resource centers include the support of the resource centers' staff and the stability and quality of the staff working in the resource centers. Barriers affecting the optimum success of the community-based continuum of care are: OCS referral practices for services; accessibility of services for clients (only 10% of resource centers provide transportation services) and funding.

In the coming year, OCS plans to continue to educate staff on the referral process and the services offered through the resource centers. Staff training on the referral process and the services offered by the resource centers may increase the number of referrals. Funding has been a major issue prohibiting the expansion of services (including transportation) offered through the resource centers.

### **1.4 Performance Measures**

The Agency is currently in its second year of a statewide Peer Case Review (PCR). This comprehensive review process was developed to create an additional form of performance measurement, to identify trends in service delivery and to improve outcomes for children and families. The process involves an intensive four-day review and includes staff from one region reviewing cases in another region. The review requires 12 staff who review 29-30 cases in teams of two. This allows for an in-depth review and examination of each program's cases. The review also requires interviews with staff on each case and stakeholder interviews on six of the cases. To complete the process, a focus group is conducted in each region with a specified group of stakeholders. Different populations are selected for each region.

In 2003-2004, seven regions participated in the PCR. The federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) conducted in September counted as the review for the remaining three regions. Both reviews are similar in process.

At the conclusion of the review, a formal exit conference is held with staff to present preliminary findings to the regions. The exit conference allows the review teams to provide verbal feedback to the region and recognize strengths. A final report is later submitted to the region, which includes a rating for each question on the instrument, focus group findings, QA information and directions for development of the corrective action plan to improve compliance with COA standards and child welfare practice overall. The region is responsible for creating, implementing and monitoring a corrective action plan and reporting progress to their regional CQI team.

### **Perspective on Peer Case Review**

As OCS arrives at the end of the second year of PCR, plans are in place to alter the instrument for next year's review to include issues from the Program Improvement Plan (PIP). It is believed that this alteration will assist with overall monitoring and reporting of progress that is mandated by the PIP process. The target date for implementation of the new process, if approved, is August 2004.

Many OCS reviewers enter this process with some anxiety, trepidation and uncertainty. However, with training and support by the coordinators assigned from state office, staff often state at the point of the exit conference that they have come to invest in and believe in this process. They realize that a degree of cross-pollination has occurred from region to region. Staff have also become familiar with the differences and similarities that exist across the State.

**Summary of Trend Data from Peer Case Reviews**

The Agency has organized and supported the full implementation of the peer case review process as required by the Council on Accreditation. Minimally, 250 cases per year must be reviewed, according to the standard, and an appropriate sample of closed and open cases across programs being implemented must be reviewed.

During the state fiscal year 2003 period (July 2002-June 2003), there were ten reviews held. This was a review of 30 cases in each of the regions during that year. During the state fiscal year 2004, there were seven peer case reviews held. The regions who were subject to the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) were omitted from peer case reviews during 2003 – 2004 as these three regions were subject to the actual CFSR process.

At the end of the 2002-2003 review period, several statewide trends were noted. Many of these issues are being given attention in the regional corrective action plans. Trends include:

- The need to increase the involvement of families in case planning.
- Exploration of both maternal and paternal relatives as resources.
- Working with fathers as resources for the child.
- The need for focused family visits.
- Closer examination of the logic and reasons for separating siblings.
- The need to improve documentation for reasons siblings are separated.

Overall, the PCR provides the Agency an opportunity for self-analysis and an in-depth examination of caseworker practice and child and family outcomes. PCR focuses on this vital connection between services and outcomes and seeks changes for improvement where indicated.

**1.5 Technical Assistance and Research/Evaluation**

**1.5 A Technical Assistance**

**Description of Development and Use of National Child Welfare Resource Center Training and Technical Assistance:**

The Children's Bureau, in the Administration on Children, Youth and Families, provides an array of training and technical assistance (T/TA) support resources through grants, contracts, and cooperative agreements. Currently, the Bureau operates ten National Resource Centers, two Clearinghouses, and four technical support projects. The Agency has utilized these resources in increasing levels during the implementation of the Consolidated Plan. The key developments across the five-year span of the Consolidated Plan are as follows:

1. Beginning in 2000, the Agency sought the assistance in its planning processes for use of the Center for Organizational Improvement, Center for Special Needs Adoption, and the Center On Family on Family Centered Practice.
2. In 2001, the Agency used a total of 25 T/TA days from the resource centers listed below:
  - Center on Family Centered Practice (10 days; case conferencing/strength building in Family Service Program participants).
  - Center on Child Maltreatment (10 days; risk/safety assessment and recidivism in child protection cases).
  - Center on Organizational Improvement (3 days; selection of staff, standards of practice and competencies, and preparing for the Child and Family Services Review process).
  - Center on Legal and Judicial Issues (2 days; presentations by Margaret Burt at the Justice for Children Conference).
3. In 2002, the Agency used a total of 43 days T/TA resource center:
  - Center on Child Maltreatment (10 days; risk/safety/recidivism assessment)
  - Center on Legal and Judicial Issues (2 days; Mediation Programs)
  - Center on Youth Development (7 days; Youth Mentoring Initiatives, Residential Facility Support and presentation at state Adoption Conference)
  - Center on Technology in Child Welfare (10 days; report proofing for Child and Family Services Review)

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- Center on Special Needs Adoption (2 days; state Adoption Conference)
  - Center on Foster Care and Permanency Planning (2 days; state Adoption Conference)
  - Center for Organizational Improvement (10 days; assistance with mock reviews for Child and Family Services Reviews)
4. In 2003, the Agency used a total of 32 T/TA days from the resource centers:
- Center on Child Maltreatment (10 days; risk/safety assessments)
  - Center on Youth Development (2 days; Independent Living Program support)
  - Center on Technology in Child Welfare (6 days; review and improve AFCARS reporting)
  - Center on Special Needs Adoption (1 day; training on “Wrongful Adoption and Agency Liability”)
  - Center on Foster Care and Permanency Planning (4 days; Louisiana Association for Child Care Agencies [LACCA] training)
  - Center for Organizational Improvement (6 days; training on Critical Incident Stress Management, Project Safe, and residential evaluation services)
  - Center on Family Centered Practice (3 days; LACCA Training)
5. In 2004, a total of 21 T/TA days were allocated from the resource centers:
- Center on Child Maltreatment (10 days; risk/safety assessments)
  - Center on Family Centered Practice (1 day; Family Resource Center Conference)
  - Center on Foster Care and Permanency Planning (2 days; enhancing home development and diligent recruitment/retention of home practices)
  - Center on Technology in Child Welfare (1 day; presentation on Child Welfare Outcomes and Survival Analysis)
  - Center on Special Needs Adoption (4 days; conference presentations and diligent recruitment enhancement efforts)
  - Center on Organizational Improvement (3 days; development of Program Improvement Plan and Integration of the Program Improvement Plan System-wide Goals into the 2005-2009 Child and Family Services Plan)



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Another development was the utilization of a developed T/TA request protocol, which was developed with assistance from the Federal ACF Program Specialist/Region VI.

The National Child Welfare Resource Center on Organizational Improvement has played a significant consultative and training role in the development of the PIP during FFY 2004. Primarily, the Center's staff provided organizational assistance with the starting point of agency preparation for development of the PIP, post-review during the December 2003 meeting held on the review. Subsequent consultation was received on the work group progress on the PIP as specifics were developed and proposed to the State Level Program Improvement Plan Steering Committee and OCS Management Team. Consultation on PIP content and formatting of the PIP into a consistent format with the planned draft of the new 5 Year Child and Family Services Plan document was received and found extremely beneficial. This consultation was provided in tandem with the state's assigned Program Officer, Thurston "TJ" Jones, from Region VI Administration for Children and Families. Specifics of how to "step out" the work group's recommendations into a coherent and operational plan of action that could be monitored and reported on during the course of the PIP implementation was particularly helpful. The Resource Centers' staff person, Elizabeth Frizzell, was particularly helpful in this process, bringing with her many varied experiences and examples from other states PIP process to share with OCS staff. Ms. Frizzell participated in three days of technical assistance to the state.

The Agency plans to use national child welfare resource centers to assist with the implementation of the approved Louisiana Program Improvement Plan (PIP).

### **1.5 B Research and Evaluation**

#### **OCS Policy and Procedures for Review and Authorization of Research Proposals**

OCS has a committee of five professional child welfare staff who review and approve or disapprove research proposals affecting agency personnel, providers, clients or data. All requests for use of agency records and/or resources for the use of research are judged based on the following:

- Potential benefit of the proposed research to knowledge development in the field of child welfare.
- Relevance to stated OCS research priorities
- Demands upon agency resources
- Potential for adverse impact of the research on the subjects and of their families
- Soundness of the research design and procedures

Further approval to conduct research requiring the release of identifying information to persons outside of the Agency is granted only upon the written recommendation of the research review committee and the authorization of the Assistant Secretary of the Office of Community Services. Release of such information is only to the designated principal investigator or co-principal investigators and to the extent absolutely necessary for each of those individuals. Each person who is to have access to such information signs a confidentiality statement.

#### **Research Proposals in Support of OCS Programs**

##### **The Effectiveness of the Foster and Adoptive Family Resource Center Mentoring Program.**

Research by the University of Louisiana at Lafayette in conjunction with the Lafayette Foster and Adoptive Family Resource Center's Mentoring Program. Assesses the effectiveness of the Mentoring Program using volunteers and measuring improvements in stress levels, self esteem and emotional control.

**Child Sexual Abuse Victims Evaluated by Children's Hospital.** Research by Jacqueline Harrison, student at LSU Health Sciences Center. Looked at legal outcomes in cases of child sexual abuse for those children medically evaluated by Children's Hospital. Methodology consisted of case reviews and supporting documentation.

##### **Determine the Need for a One-Stop Service Center for Child Victims of Sexual Abuse.**

Research by Judy Laurendine and Peggy Pittman-Munke of Southeastern Louisiana University involved a record study and some interviews with caseworkers. It consisted of a study of the outcomes of cases of child abuse victims who were given a forensic interview at the Child Advocacy Center and were also clients of OCS. The primary goal was to identify the unfulfilled treatment needs of the children seen at the center.

**Street Detection and Investigation of Child Abuse and Neglect.** University of Louisiana at Monroe, Department of Criminal Justice research on the need for training for both Law

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Enforcement and Social Workers who deal with child abuse and neglect. Data collection was accomplished through use of a questionnaire completed by both social workers and law enforcement.

**Attitudes Toward Trans-Racial Adoption and the Implementation of MEPA** . Dr. Billy Stewart, Southern University at New Orleans School of Social Work supervised students who conducted the research using questionnaires completed by OCS foster care and adoption workers.

**A Discriminate Analysis of Externalizing Behaviors and Temperament as Predictors of Disruption in Long Term Foster Care and Adoption: Matching Kids and Parents for Permanence**. Research by Jennifer Savage, University of Louisiana at Monroe to determine if match between child externalizing behaviors and parent-child temperaments can contribute to prevention of disruption.

**Child Behavior Study (Infant Team Follow-up Study)**. Research conducted by the Tulane University Health Sciences Center to assess OCS children having been part of the program in comparison to other subjects.

**Preliminary Examination of the Psychometric Properties of the Casey Foster Applicant Inventory-Family Foster Care Worker Version**. Jim Orme, University of Tennessee College of Social Work lead the research initiative to test the new measure to be used by family foster care workers in identifying foster family applicants' strengths and service needs.

**Project LA-SAFE Research Component**. Study by LSU's Office of Social Service Research and Development to provide the research component for Project LA-SAFE (Substance Abuse Family Empowerment) project in Jefferson Parish.

**Child Recidivism Study**. Tulane University Department of Psychiatry and Pediatrics study comparing the outcomes for children who are adopted in comparison to children placed with relatives and to children returned home.

**Face and Emotion Recognition Study**. Tulane University/Jefferson Parish Human Services Authority (JPHSA) Infant Team study involving children seen at the Infant Team in Jefferson Parish. Involves children entering foster care, ages 5 years and under.

**Assessing the Effectiveness of the Participation of Louisiana's Court Appointed Special Advocates (LACASA) in Child Maltreatment Cases**. Metropolitan Crime Commission study of the effectiveness of the participation of Court Appointed Special Advocates in child maltreatment cases by comparing cases with CASA participation against federal measures.

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**Research on Program Improvement Plans (PIP) Generated from Child and Family Service Reviews (CFSR) nationwide.** LSU School of Social Work research for preparation of Louisiana PIP.

**State Participation in Consortium Development.** Louisiana is a participant in a developing consortium, entitled: "Consortium for University-Agency Partnerships to Improve Child Welfare." The initial participation for the Agency in the consortium occurred on March 24, 2004 via conference call to 42 states and with over 150 representatives from public agencies, universities, and advocacy organizations. This consortium is in its beginning stages and Louisiana hopes to join with this project. Stated opportunities for this project are to: engage existing partnerships and provide technical assistance for other jurisdictions to develop partnerships; provide a forum for discussion and an infrastructure to enable comparative work between areas; provide an opportunity to share data more quickly and look at trends immediately; and, improve the analytical capacity of public agencies in an effort to understand causes of data outcomes. This initiative is planned for carry over into the 2005-2009 Consolidated Child and Family Services Plan.

### **1.6 Management Information System**

Over the past five years, OCS has engaged in activities to move from a mainframe silo legacy system to a web-based system with multiple channels of access. By the end of 1999, a Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) focus group had completed preliminary stages of reviewing and refining requirements for meeting federal guidelines and Louisiana baseline data needs. A Request for Proposals (RFP) was developed and released in February 2000. The Agency formed and staffed the project team to begin design and development of a SACWIS. A contract was awarded to American Management Systems (AMS) to begin Phase I, the detailed system design of a SACWIS for the State of Louisiana. In November 2000, contractor staff and state project staff began joint work on the design of SACWIS, which was later named Louisiana Automated Family and Kids Information Data System (LAKIDS). The team, together with Maximus and Walter R. McDonald Associates (WRMA), who partnered together as the quality assurance vendor, worked for the next 14 months to finalize the detailed system design. In January, 2002, the Agency accepted the final detailed system design.

It was at this time that the Department of Social Services (DSS) determined that rather than pursue another silo system, it would move toward an enterprise system that would eventually encompass system functionality for all programs within the DSS. Contract amendments were made with Maximus and WRMA to begin looking at the currently existing practices (As Is model), commonality among programs, and vision for the future (Strategic Model). The project team was expanded to include other DSS programs, in particular TANF and child care, to formulate requirements, vision, and the eventual RFP for the design and development of an enterprise system utilizing a Commercial Off-the-Shelf (COTS) framework software package. The APD was updated for approval of continued funding through Title IV-E for the development and implementation of the new system, A Comprehensive Enterprise Social Services (ACESS) system.

DSS envisioned the use of a single, state-of-the-art automated information system that will grow over time to support all of the programs administered by DSS. DSS will manage this process through a phased implementation starting with Child Welfare, TANF, and Childcare. ACESS should be a web-enabled, client-centered information system that will improve service delivery and case management throughout DSS by increasing electronic information sharing and improving reporting.

The project team worked toward the development of an RFP that solicited vendors who could design, develop and implement this vision in an incremental fashion. In August 2003, the RFP for the procurement of a COTS framework and design, development and implementation of ACESS was released. Proposals were reviewed and scored, and a contract was awarded to IBM and its partners, Deloitte Consulting, Red Mane and Curam. Work between the contracted vendors and the Agency commenced in May 2004.

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The project team has continued to refine requirements, map the State requirements to SACWIS requirements, define the needs of the Agency for the capture and reporting of data, research changes in agency practice and policy, and prepare for the project initiation.

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## 1.7 Indian Child Welfare Act and Tribal Collaboration

### *Introduction*

#### **Legal Reference**

42 USC622(b)  
45 CFR1357.15(d)(1)  
45 CFR1357.15(1)(3)(r)  
P.L. 103-432

Louisiana has four federally recognized Indian (American Indian) tribes. The American Indian population of these tribes is 0.57% of the total population of Louisiana.

### **Federal Tribes**

**COA  
G2.2**

Chitimacha Tribe  
(St. Mary Parish)  
P.O. Box 661  
Charenton, LA 70523  
(337) 923-7215  
Al Leblanc, Chairman

Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana  
(Allen Parish)  
P.O. Box 968  
Elton, LA 70532  
(337) 584-2261  
Lovelin Poncho, Chairman

Tunica-Biloxi Tribe  
(Avoyelles Parish)  
P.O. Box 331  
Marksville, LA 71351  
(318) 253-9767  
Earl Barbry, Chairman

Jena Band of Choctaw  
(Grant, Rapides, & Lasalle Parishes)  
P.O. Box 14  
Jena, LA 71342  
(318) 992-2717  
Christine Norris, Chairman

The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) primarily accords certain protections to federally recognized tribes. The State via this agency is cognizant of the need to be more inclusive of all the differing ethnicities and cultures represented in our local communities. The Agency recognizes that American Indian tribes are unique and that addressing their problems may require approaches different than the ones used with other racial, ethnic or cultural groups. In compliance with ICWA, the Agency has drafted program policy governing case planning and service delivery as a means to ensure that the cultural heritage and best interest of a child of American Indian heritage are protected. Specific Foster Care Program policies address proceedings relating to the following: family preservation and family support services, tribal notifications when a child enters the state system, tribal jurisdiction, foster care placement, termination of parental rights, pre-adoptive placement, and adoptive placement.

Along with the development of agency policy relating to ICWA, the Agency provided training for its staff and stakeholders on ICWA. The Adoption Conference in 2000 included Valerie P. Lane, JD, who presented on the culture and legal aspects of ICWA. In 2001, agency training staff participated in training by Ms. Judy Baggett on ICWA and in turn presented this information to all the regions of the State. This information was incorporated into the Agency's "Caseworker Competency" training curriculum, which emphasizes the exclusive rights of American Indian

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tribes. American Indian parents/tribes are given notice of state proceedings; and special preference is given for the placement of American Indian children. The Agency mandates for compliance with ICWA provisions are applicable to all American Indian Children including those who are members of, or who are eligible for membership in a tribe located in a state other than Louisiana. During that period, the Agency took reasonable efforts to proactively coordinate its state child and family services program with that of Louisiana-based American Indian Tribal Organizations in order to resolve child and family-related crises and connect with necessary and appropriate services.

The Agency has entered into one formal working agreement with the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of the Alexandria region. This working relationship continues to be positive. All investigations and incidents involving tribal children are discussed with the Social Service Director for the tribe. The tribe continues to have a full-time mental health counselor to provide parenting education, intensive family services, domestic violence prevention and community support/services. The local substance abuse clinic provides in-patient and out-patient substance abuse services to tribal members. The tribe has hired a judge to handle court and legal matters.

In January 2003, the Alexandria region revised the earlier agreement designed to cover the protection of children of adults who are visiting Grand Casino Avoyelles (which is located on tribal property). The agreement outlines how reports of suspected child abuse and neglect reported by the Tunica/Biloxi tribal police will be handled. Further, it shows the cooperative working relationship between the tribe and the regional OCS office.

While the Agency has only entered into one formal working agreement, informal working agreements exist with the other tribes in the State. The Jena Band of Choctaws is the tribe located within Catahoula/LaSalle Parishes. The tribe is a structured organization with whom OCS has developed a positive, focused working relationship. The tribe has continued to make reports to the Agency when there have been concerns about tribal members, families and children. At any time an American Indian family's child(ren) has been taken into DSS custody, the tribe has continued to defer to agency process and decisions. As they have no judicial system, they defer to the District Court as well. There is ongoing contact between the tribe and the Agency when jointly serving the same families; however, a written agreement has not been completed. In 1994, our Lake Charles regional office drafted a working agreement with the Coushatta Tribe. While that particular draft agreement was not signed by tribal leaders, our regional office reports that the general terms of the agreement are being followed. The Chitimacha Tribe located in Charenton, Louisiana has an informal working agreement with the Lafayette Regional OCS office which includes consultation with regard to child abuse and neglect investigations, and expert witness testimony in tribal court proceedings. Also, only families living off the reservation are investigated by OCS. For several years, OCS has maintained a positive working relationship with the tribe. The tribe is notified if OCS receives a complaint regarding an American Indian family not residing on the reservation. At that time, a decision is made between the two agencies with regard to which agency will accept responsibility for completing the investigation.



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As part of the planning process for 2004, a copy of the final 2003 Annual Progress and Services Report of the Consolidated Plan was sent to all tribes, along with the request that they review and offer recommendations. A relationship was developed in 2002 with the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs and its representative, Ms. Pat Arnould. As an active member of the Continuous Quality Improvement Committee on Consumers and Community, Ms. Arnould has been active in representing the tribal needs at each meeting. She also has taken a role in reviewing the last two Annual Progress and Services Reports.

The Family Resource Network, a collaboration of the Title V-B, Part 2 funded family resource centers, offered all American Indian social service staff free admittance (waiving the registration fees) to attend the Network's conference which was held May 21, 2004. This was done to invite American Indian Tribes' social service staff to attend and to enhance collaboration.

Throughout the development of the Statewide Self Assessment, as part of the Child and Family Services Review, the state reached out to American Indian Tribes seeking their input and involvement Child and Family Services Review Process. The following are several examples of that participation:

- Karen Mathews, Social Service Director, Chitamacha Tribe, participated as interviewee in the CFSR. The reviewers interviewed her as a statewide, stakeholder interviewee. She was interviewed in the CFSR process.
- As part of the Statewide Assessment process and information gathering, in January 2003, a meeting was held with Jena Band of Choctaw Tribe and the Coushatta Indian Tribes; the meeting was also attended by Ms. Pat Arnould of the Governor's Office for Indian Affairs. The focus of the discussion was on certification of non-tribal foster homes for American Indian children.
- Jean Allen Wilson, the Social Services Assistant Director of the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana participated on the Core Team Subcommittee of the statewide assessment process, which was done as part of the Child and Family Services Review.

**1.8 Child Abuse & Prevention Treatment Act**

The Child Abuse and Neglect Basic State Grant has been utilized to compliment and support the overall mission of the Agency with emphasis on developing, strengthening, and carrying out child abuse and neglect prevention and treatment programs. Grant funds have been directed toward prevention campaigns, actual service delivery to protective service clients or at risk populations, and support services for staff who are assigned the duties of child protection, intake assessment, screening and investigation of reports of abuse and neglect.

The following program areas within subsection (a) of Section 106 have been addressed during the last funding cycles:

- Enhanced and supported the intake, assessment, screening and investigation of reports of abuse and neglect;
- Developed, strengthened, and facilitated training opportunities and requirements for individuals overseeing and providing services to children and their families through the child protection system;
- Enhanced and supported case management and delivery of services provided to children and their families;
- Enhanced the general child protective system by improving risk and safety assessment tools and protocols, automated systems that support the program and track reports of child abuse and neglect from intake through final disposition, and information and referral systems;
- Developed, strengthened and supported child abuse and neglect prevention, treatment, and research programs in the public and private sectors;
- Developed, implemented or operated programs to assist in obtaining or coordinating necessary services for families of disabled infants with life-threatening conditions; developing and enhancing the capacity of community-based programs to integrate shared leadership strategies between parents and professionals to prevent and treat child abuse and neglect at the neighborhood level.

Louisiana allocated the funds awarded under the child abuse and neglect state grant to the above program initiatives. All initiatives were compatible with the OCS management and strategic plan and relate to the Agency's responsibility in the area of prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect. All initiatives were designed to improve the child protection system within the State.

As required by Section 106(b)(2)(C), some of the program initiatives related directly to services to be provided under the grant to individuals, families, or communities aimed at preventing the occurrence of child abuse and neglect; training to support direct line and supervisory personnel

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in report taking, screening, assessment, decision making and referral for investigating suspected child abuse and neglect; and training for individuals who were required to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect. The remaining program initiatives related to overall child abuse and neglect prevention efforts within the community at large and the provision of specialized support to agency front line staff that work within the child protection system.

**1.9 Citizen Review Panel (CRP)**

CRP recommendations have varied from panel to panel as group membership shifted and purpose and activities evolved. Recommendations included:

- Collaborate or enter into working agreements with other state agencies (e.g. Louisiana State Board of Education and the State Board of Medical Examiners).
- Issues regarding child safety
- Agency Staff turnover
- Agency Worker safety
- Agency Caseload standards
- Involvement of fathers in service delivery
- Education of citizens and mandated reporters on reporting on child abuse and neglect
- Confidentiality of children in foster care
- Reporting of child abuse and neglect into wants/warrants system of law enforcement
- OCS staff salary
- Conducting status conferences in judges chambers

**Barriers/Challenges Impacting OCS Action on CRP Recommendations**

During this planning cycle, the Agency helped to establish six Citizen Review Panels around the State. Panels in the Covington Region, Beauregard and Calcasieu Parishes and the Alexandria Region have been meeting since 1999. Early on, the Agency worked to establish two additional panels in the Monroe and Shreveport Regions and in 2002, the panels began meeting. Regional staff has played a critical role in assisting panels in understanding their role, the role of OCS and the State's child protection system. At the state office level, staff has attended CRP meetings, provided information regarding available funding, created formats for CRP annual reports, provided feedback on CRP recommendations and submitted CRP reports to the Administration for Children and Families.

Based on recommendations of the CRP and national accreditation standards, the Agency has developed a public education plan that is currently a work in progress. When complete, the plan will strategically outline all of the Agency's public education efforts. Past public awareness efforts include some of the following: mandated reporter in-services, development and distribution of a mandatory reporters brochure and public service announcements around the issues of the danger of leaving children in hot cars and "co-sleeping".

Additional CRP issues and recommendations address staff turnover, caseload standards, father involvement in case planning, confidentiality, departmental legal access to computer systems for background checks, reporting child abuse and neglect into the legal wants and warrant system, and the use of the Family Court Model in Child in Need of Care cases.

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The state level Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) team continues to monitor staff turnover on a quarterly basis and OCS continues to be below the national average in staff turnover as well as caseload standards.

The Agency has taken steps to address the engagement of fathers in child welfare services. Policy changes have been made and are being addressed further in the Agency's Program Improvement Plan (PIP). Videoconferences on father involvement were conducted for agency staff and the OCS Training Section has developed a curriculum on father engagement. Staff training is expected to begin in April 2004.

The CRP reported concerns regarding confidentiality of children in care. They indicated that workers driving marked state vehicles are visiting children at school, and that this identifies them as foster children. Confidentiality is of high priority for OCS and the Agency has explored whether or not our fleet of vehicles could include some vehicles that do not have the state/agency seal. This is not possible as per the Division of Administration. While the agency is unable to provide unmarked vehicles for staff use, the importance of sensitivity to confidentiality for children is covered in Act 710 training for beginning workers. OCS continues to emphasize that these contacts be conducted as discretely and sensitively as possible to protect the confidentiality and feelings of the child(ren). The issue of discrete and confidential contacts with children in placement who are visited at school has recently (September 2004) been a topic of discussion with the OCS Management Team and the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Team (State Team). Although workers may use their own personal cars for such contacts at the school facilities, the Agency will explore if there are provisions allowed by state oversight agencies to allow for a certain number of unmarked state cars. The CQI Team will review this issue as a topic in future meetings with hope of resolution, if possible.

New legislation is being proposed to implement panel recommendations on legal access to computer systems for background checks. In addition, OCS is obtaining legal clearance regarding the reporting of child abuse and neglect into the wants and warrants system of law enforcement and has referred the panel's issue regarding use of the Family Court Model to Court Improvement Project and the Safe Act Task Force.

One of the barriers to the success of the panels has been the fact that the responsibility for overall OCS monitoring of the panels has changed three times during this planning cycle. The Agency's lack of response to the panel's 2002 recommendations may have contributed to a loss of momentum with some panels and their reluctance to submit their 2003 annual report. Initially, the OCS executive management team reviewed Citizen Review Panel recommendations and suggested strategies to address the issues that were within the Agency's control. Some strategies required OCS action, while others required explanation of the scope of the Agency (e.g., budget information). Currently, the state level CRP liaison reviews CRP recommendations and utilizes the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process to address difficult issues that the panels may present. The CRP liaison provides a written response to the panels' recommendations. All of the 2002 and 2003 recommendations have been reviewed and the responses sent to panels. (To review CRP recommendations for 2002/2003 and the Agency's response to the panel's

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recommendations, refer to the 2003 Louisiana Citizen Review Panel Report submitted with this plan.)

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LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES  
OFFICE OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

ANNUAL CITIZENS REVIEW PANEL REPORT  
CALENDAR YEARS 2002 AND 2003



## Introduction

### *Citizen Review Panel Mandate*

*The purpose of the Citizen Review Panel (CRP) is to provide new opportunities to play and integral role in ensuring that States are meeting their goals of protecting children from abuse and neglect.*

*In 1996, the U.S. Congress amended the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). In its amendments to CAPTA (SEC.106 [42 U.S.C.510a], Congress required states to establish Citizen Review Panels in order to maintain eligibility for funding from the Child Abuse and Neglect State Grants Program.*

*The federal statute indicates that the purpose of the Citizen Review Panels is to “evaluate the extent to which the agencies (state and local) are effectively discharging their child protection responsibilities.” Although the statute provides general guidelines for the panels, the functions of the CRPs are generally and broadly defined. This best suits the ability to address the issues of the local communities in which they are located.*

### *Citizen Review Panel Scope of Responsibility*

*The panels must examine the policies, procedures, and where appropriate, specific cases, handled by the state and local agencies providing child protective services. In particular, the panels must evaluate:*

- *The State CAPTA plan and specific area of the child protective system which are addressed therein*
- *The State’s compliance with federal child protection standards and assurances set forth in the CAPTA legislation*
- *Any other criteria, which the panels consider important to ensure the protection of children, including the coordination of child protection with, foster care and adoption services, and the State’s review process for child fatalities and near fatalities.*

*The revised CAPTA requirements called for each state to establish CRPs by July 1, 1999. The panels must meet at least quarterly and must produce an annual, public report of their activities. A state has the option to designate existing committees or advisory entities to serve as Citizen Review Panels if these entities meet the federal requirements.*

### *Citizen Review Panel Mandated Requirements*

*Federal law requires that a State’s CRP system*

- *Include at least three (3) panels*
- *Be operational by July 1999*
- *Be composed of volunteer members who are:*



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- *Broadly representative of the community in which they operate*
- *Experienced in the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect*
- *Meet at least every 3 months*
- *Examine policies and procedures and, where applicable, specific cases of both state and local agencies*
- *Maintain confidentiality*
- *Prepare an annual report. The most recent amendment of CAPTA requires states to respond to the panel's recommendations no later than 6 months after recommendations are submitted.*

### ***Location of Citizen Review Panels***

*Louisiana has five (5) Citizen Review Panels located in various areas of the state. Two of the panels are parish based; Beauregard (located in the south eastern quadrant of the state) and Rapides (located in the center of the state). The additional three (3) panels are Regionally based and is made up of a number of parishes. These panels are the Covington Region, Monroe Region, and the Shreveport*

### ***Activities/Recommendations of Citizen Review Panels***

#### ***Shreveport Region***

#### ***Membership***

*Nadalie Thomas  
Judi Christian  
Charles Beckhan  
Rep. Lydia Jackson  
Rebecca Evans-Kelly*

*Richard Rodgers  
St. Larry Nunnery  
Theresa Medlin  
Fayrine Gilbert  
Rep. Cedric Glover*

*Margaret Basco  
Jill Welsh  
James Smith  
Lucy Becken  
Trudie Abner*

#### ***2002 Activities:***

*The Shreveport CRP met in organizational session on January 29, 2002. The panel met a total of total of five (5) times during the year. Some of the activities and topics discussed included the following:*

- *Safe Haven" Abandon Baby legislation*
- *Submission of a grant application to the Children Trust Fund for a public awareness campaign on the Safe Haven Law*
- *Overview of agency programs; Adoptions, Home Development, Recruitment of Foster/Adoptive Families, Foster Care, and reviewed state laws on Termination of Parental Rights*

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### *2002 Recommendations/Agency Responses*

- That OCS develops a statewide plan to increase public awareness of state reporting laws. Special concern should be given to educate all mandated reporters of the legislative mandate to report all cases of suspected child abuse/neglect.

OCS is currently working on a number of public awareness strategies targeting the general public and mandated reporters. OCS and the Department of Education are working together to develop/implement training for teachers and prospective teachers on reporting child abuse and neglect. Legislation (Senate Bill 797) was passed during the 2003 legislative session mandating that students majoring in education receive instructions on mandated reporting prior to receiving teacher certification. This collaboration is also considering criteria for monitoring training in universities for student teachers, mandating in-service training for teachers, mandating that school districts' policies and procedures comply with the law, and monitoring the creation and distribution of materials.

Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana (PCAL) has developed a video around child abuse and neglect which we are also studying for use. In addition we are coordinating these efforts into a state wide public education plan that will provide opportunities for the general public to consistently become educated about the agency and lend to more realistic and accurate public perception of it's programs, services, and limitations.

### *2003 Activities*

The panel met a total of six (6) times during 2003. The following activities and topics were discussed:

- Continued discussion around the Safe Haven Laws, with a presentation from the legislations author, Representative Cedric Glover.
- Submitted a grant application to the Children Trust Fund to fund a public awareness campaign. The grant was not funded.
- Discussion on retention of members, with letters sent to inactive members requesting their participation.
- Reviewed two child fatality cases presented from Caddo and Bossier Parish Offices.
- Anthony Ellis, State CRP Liaison, provided the panel with a pamphlet from the Citizen Review Panel from Kentucky. The pamphlet focused on how to make panels more effective governing confidentiality and mandated reporter follow-up.
- Panel viewed a video on the dangers of sleeping with infants and or small children.

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## 2003 Recommendations/Agency Responses

- Mandated reporters should receive feedback.

The agency continues to look at efforts to educate and provide follow-up to mandated reporters. It is correct that policy directs what is shared with all reporters of child abuse/neglect. In addition, mandated reporters have an obligation to follow all verbal reports of abuse/neglect with a written report to the agency within 5 days of the verbal. Agency reporter follow-up currently exists on all investigations of child abuse/neglect when the identity of the reporter is known. This follow-up consists of notice of intent to investigate and a notice of completion of the investigation. However, the confidentiality of the family is always first and foremost. Information shared with the reporter, mandated are not, is limited only to the status of the investigation. Only in cases where the reporter is providing some form of treatment to the family is limited information shared.

We are providing you with a Mandated Reporter Survey from the National Citizens Review Panel resource directory for your review and possible use.

### *Monroe Region*

#### **Membership**

Stacey Moak, Ph.D  
Beck Smith, RN  
Johnny Robinson  
Linda Christmas  
Sharon Kilcoyne  
Jan Daniels

Pam Futch  
Kristi Guidry  
Tim Fife  
Martha Flanagan  
Becky Ledbetter  
Honorable B. Scott Leehy

Carolyn Lewis  
John Washington  
Pat Melton  
Bobby Stephenson  
Ray Owens

#### **2002 Activities:**

The Monroe CRP was convened in Quachita Parish on December 13, 2001. The panel met a total of (5) five times in its inaugural year.

The panel discussed /reviewed the following topics:

- Overview of the different programs of the agency
- Reviewed Child Protection (CPI) policy
- Mandated reporting/confidentiality
- Presentations from Agency Programs; Foster Care, Family Services, Child Protection Investigation

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## 2002 Recommendations/Responses

### Staffing

1. Staff shortages in the region are a considerable concern in that it affects the safety and well being of children. If investigations cannot be completed in a timely fashion, if a family cannot receive needed services, and if a child in need of care cannot be served efficiently, OCS will be unable to meet the mandates and requirements of the office.

We will have to continue to adjust to change in the SFY 2004-2005. Please know that agency will continue to work to fulfill its mission and confront the challenges as they are presented. The new administration has a vision for addressing many of the concerns raised. The concern will be forwarded to the Secretary of the Department of Social Services, Ann Williamson, and we will advise you at a later date of her response.

2. The staff turnover phenomenon in Child Protection Services is a critical area of concern. Increased salary, benefits, and supports should be considered to address this critical need. One recommendation would be to provide a bonus benefit for this high-stress, hazardous duty position.

A new pay plan was implemented on March 1, 2003, which has since addressed some of concerns of this recommendation. There are no plans at this time to provide a bonus or supplemental pay for hazardous duty positions. We are forwarding this concern to the Secretary of the Department of Social Services, Ann Williamson, and will advise you at a later date of her response.

### Reporting

1. Mandatory Reporting should be reviewed to insure that reporters are fully aware of their duties and responsibilities. They should also be educated about the process so they will not become discouraged or impatient. Often they don't always know that once they make the report, their job is finished. OCS Child Protection staff will respond and take necessary steps to investigate the report. A comprehensive campaign that targeted mandatory reporters, especially schools, doctors, and hospitals, is recommended.

OCS is currently working on a number of public awareness strategies targeting the general public and mandated reporters. OCS and the Department of Education are working together to develop/implement training for teachers and prospective teachers on reporting child abuse and neglect. Legislation (Senate Bill 797) was passed during the 2003 legislative session mandating that students majoring in education receive instructions on mandated reporting prior to receiving teacher certification. This collaboration is also considering criteria for monitoring training in universities for student teachers; mandating in-service training for teachers, mandate that school districts' policies and procedures comply with the law, and monitoring the creation and distribution of materials.

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Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana (PCAL) developed a video around child abuse and neglect which the agency is also studying for use. In addition we are coordinating these efforts into a state wide public education plan that will provide opportunities for the general public to consistently become educated about the agency and lend to more realistic and accurate public perception of it's programs, services, and limitations.

2. False reporting is also an area of concern. Too many resources are used to investigate false reports, many of which relate to custody suits. It was recommended that false reporters be prosecuted as set forth in state law. The confidentiality of reporters is a drawback in this regard which needs to be reviewed and addressed, so that false reporting counteracts confidentiality provisions.

There appears to be two issues here, false reports and confidentiality. The agency seldom receives false reports, where the reporter maliciously set out to defame, harass, or cause trouble for an individual by providing factitious information. Most reporters truly believe that children are at some type of abuse/neglect risk when they report. When there is cause to believe that a report is maliciously false, it is referred to District Attorney for legal follow-up, who determines if the referral is prosecuted.

There is current procedure to address the second issue of this recommendation. Louisiana Revised Statue 46:56 states that the department shall not disclose identifying information concerning an individual who initiated a report or complaint of child abuse or neglect, except that the department shall disclose such information pursuant to a court order after such court has reviewed, in camera (in court), the department's case record and finds reason to believe that the reporter knowingly made a false report. However, though we encourage reporter identity, some of reporter do report anonymously, which could hinder the aforementioned.

### Caseloads

1. Caseload size is another area of concern. Sufficient staffing would allow for manageable caseload size.

Caseload size has been adjusted due the recent number of positions the agency has to unfund by July 1, 2004. We anticipate that it will take until the end of the fiscal year (June 30, 2004) before all the adjustments are made. Supervisory coverage will also be adjusted relative to these new standards. The new adjustments are as follows:

Foster Care: 1 worker per 10 foster children. 15 cases for a facility liaison worker

Adoption: 1 worker per every 15 children available for adoption

Family Services: 1 worker per every 15 families

Child Protection Investigation: (unchanged) 10 new referral per worker per month

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## **Judicial**

1. It is recommended that Status Conferences be conducted in the chambers of the judges hearing the cases, as done in the 5<sup>th</sup> District. This conference would include the attorneys, the OCS workers, and even the biological and foster parents so that attorneys and judges can have a better understanding of the cases before they are presented in court.

This is presently a mandate in Termination of Parental Rights cases. The Children's Code allows for status conferences in child in need of care hearings, but they are not always done.

2. It was noted that the Family Court model should be considered as a way to ensure that judges are more specialized in family preservation, family reunification, and child protection issues. Recommendations include Mediation as a viable option; a Domestic Commissioner or some other employee of the judicial district who could hear some of the cases; and not rotating judges from one district to the next, although this would not allow for a more diverse perspective and could limit decision outcomes to the perspectives and attitudes of one judge.

Unfortunately, OCS has no control over how judges handle their courts. The issue has been referred to the Supreme Court Improvement Project (CIP) for addressing. The CIP Advisory Group will meet in March and plans to put this recommendation on its agenda. This issue will also be recommended as an agenda item for the OCS SAFE Act Committee meeting.

## **Other Areas of Concern**

1. Services to fathers are not always required or expected, especially in Family Services cases. Foster Care fathers can be court-ordered. It is recommended that ways to engage fathers effectively be explored and incorporated in case plans and case activities.

The agency has taken steps to address this issue. Policy changes have been made and are being addressed further in the agency's Program Improvement Plan (PIP). Videoconferences on father involvement were conducted for agency staff. The OCS Training Section has developed a curriculum on father engagement, with staff training expected to begin in April 2004.

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## **2003 Activities**

The panel met three (3) times during 2003. The following topics/issues was discussed at the meetings:

- Overview of the Adoption and YAP Programs
- The Home Development Unit, including the number foster homes and the number of adoptive foster homes.
- Overview of the Quality Assurance Unit, its' function and its duties and DSS/OCS Accreditation process
- Review panel membership, gain commitments for panel participants, and replace members with other citizens throughout the region who are interested in improving child welfare services.
- Identify areas of interests and establish workgroups within the panel around issues and concerns.
- Review responses to concerns and recommendations and work with regional and parish offices to address methods and resources to improve service delivery.
- Continue to review program areas and address problems as they arise.
- Explore ways to sustain participation of panel membership.

## **2003 Recommendations/Agency Responses**

### **Staffing**

1. Critical shortages are projected with the next round of state budget cut backs that severely impact staffing of the OCS services. Increased caseloads in the Home Development Unit are already leading to delays in certification. OCS staff is being required to combine duties and work more in other parishes in the region. This can lead to inefficiency, ineffectiveness, and burnout. The needs of families and children may be compromised, as is evident with long delays in completing home studies and finalizing adoptions.

Unfortunately, the agency will have to continue to adjust to change in the SFY 2004-2005. The agency appreciates your commitment to our mission and your efforts to focus on the opportunities for change.

2. DSS/OCS cannot continue to bear the lion's share of state budget cuts. Home Development staff has been reduced from eight (8) to five (5), and it is taking longer to complete certification or address the needs of families through problem-solving and support with such staff limitations.

This question was addressed in question 1 under "Staffing".

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3. Projected loss of experience staff to transfers and retirement will have an impact on service delivery.

This question was addressed in question 1 under "Staffing".

## Recruitment of Homes

1. A full-time recruiter position for foster and adoptive homes would help to ensure that a pool of available home always exists and that children can be matched with families that best meet their needs. The use of parent recruiter is an excellent recruitment strategy and also serves to display an appreciation and respect for parents in their roles as foster and adoptive resources.

This question was addressed in question 1 under "Staffing"

2. More Bridge Homes are needed so that the children needs are more adequately assessed before placing them in homes that are not able to address the full range of issues and problems the children have. We should not have to place a child in a home only because it is the only home with a bed available.

While the agency recognizes the need for this valued resource, recruiting families for Bridge Homes has been an ongoing issue for the agency. There are many demands on a Bridge Home family during the first weeks of child being placed in the home, i.e.: doctor's appointments, evaluations, family visits, etc. It requires a stay home caretaker, as in many families both adults work outside of the home. We have also found that families are not willing to have short-term placements, opting for the stability/consistency of long term placements.

There are currently five (5) Bridge homes in the Monroe Region. The Agency welcome and invite you to spread the word about this need among your constituents, friends, and family.

3. Recruitment also relates to the issue of Matching. Suggestions include more adequate assessment during training before certification; the establishment of a receiving facility so we could get to know the children and make a better match before placing them in a foster or adoptive home; better decision-making regarding the developmental needs and age of children as related to the age of foster and adoptive parents, especially with an eye to the future of the placement once the child reaches adolescence.

When a child has to be removed from the home of his/her family our goal is always to strive for the most family like setting. (See the answer to question #2 above). This is a function of the Bridge Homes.



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## Retention

1. Foster parents who get the training and then leave foster parenting after a bad first or second placement often relates to unrealistic expectation of fostering experience. This should be more effectively addressed in MAPP/GPS. Having foster and adoptive parents involved as co-trainers is an excellent step in addressing this problem.

The agency agrees with this premise and have encouraged our regions to use parent co-trainers whenever possible. This gives prospective foster parents first hand knowledge. Training provides thorough overview of the fostering experience. Successful fostering requires; 1) ongoing support to foster parents from their caseworkers, as well as taking advantage of the available in-service training that target many of the problem areas of fostering and 2) better home selections (taking into account the needs of the child) at placement of foster children.

2. Parents may need more front-end support. Once a child is placed, there needs to be more hands-on services and face-to-face contact with the family. More referrals to the Family Resource Center would help to address this problem. Also, increased staffing to allow for foster care staff and Home Development staff to aid and support families, especially with new placements.

DSS/OCS State Office Field Liaison staff will coordinate with existing Regional and Resource Center staff's efforts to further educate all agency program personnel about the services of the Family Resource Centers.

3. Adoptive parents need more post-adoptive services. The Respite Care Services grant being administered locally by ULM Family Connections is an excellent example of resources adoptive families need to remain connected.

All of the Adoptive Resource Centers provide services such as respite care. The grant referenced provides enhancement to that service. It is time limited and dependent upon external federal funding. The Agency will continue to take advantage and utilize available funding opportunities as they arise to enhance additional services for our families.

4. Foster parents want to feel respected and appreciated, and don't always feel this is reflected in their dealings with OCS staff. Inclusion of foster/adoptive parents as co-trainers and recruiters in a step in the right direction. More strategies should be explored.

Foster parents are critical to the success of the agency's mission; therefore inclusion and the team philosophy are continually emphasized and supported by the agency (See question #1 under "Retention").

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## Certification

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1. Certification is taking a long time. Staffing shortages, fingerprinting problems, and other delays are impeding the certification process. A review of how certification is handled in other states would be helpful in developing new ways to expedite the certification process statewide.

Louisiana is in line with most states regarding foster/adoptive resource family certifications. We differ in the fact that we allow provisional certification where most states do not, as the agency values the culture of the families of this state and the role that family's play in meeting the needs of it own children in crisis. Program staff continues to work on improving this process. The recent addition of in-house fingerprinting has been a vast improvement in achieving timely certification.

2. The training component of the certification process needs to be reviewed and possibly strengthened to further assist parents in understanding the emotional scars and behavioral problems that foster children will bring into their homes and help them develop understanding and skills in how to handle them.

This is another area that State Office Program staff continues to assess. However, current in-service training for resource families targets many of the issues of the children in the foster care system. The agency will continue to emphasize the importance of these trainings as well as staff support in ensuring successful fostering and/or adoption experiences.

3. While the ability to complete training hours online is a wonderful advancement, we need to assess if its truly an effective way to meet the training needs of foster/adoptive parents, especially during the first two-three years of foster parenting. Group or individual training allows for more engagement, discussion, and interaction with other parents and may be more effective in the long run.

The Agency agrees that group or individual training allow for a more interactive experience. However, there are times when families, who are interested in being a resource for our children, cannot attend this type of setting. Again more emphasis will be placed on utilizing the in-service trainings and staff support of the resource families.

### **Subsidies**

1. Concern was expressed that foster and adoptive parents are using subsidies appropriately, and that this well monitored by DSS/OCS staff. At no time should it be obvious that a child is adoptive or foster because he is not dressed appropriately or his appearance is unkempt.

DSS/OCS monitors this issue appropriately and has procedures in place to thwart improprieties. Caseworkers are required to make monthly visits to the foster/adoptive

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home. During these visits, it is customary to observe wardrobe and inquire about wardrobe purchases. In addition, caseworkers should periodically observe the physical appearance of the child and make inquiries to the type of care he/she receives in the home. If there is cause for concern, additional information can be obtained from collaterals such as teachers, neighbors, etc. about the care of the child. If improprieties are discovered and substantiated, the agency initiates corrective action to the foster/adoptive resource.

Once a child's adoption is finalized the agency no longer has monitoring responsibilities regarding any subsidies the child may receive. If there is cause for concern and suspicion that the child is not being properly cared for, this information should be reported to the local DSS/OCS office as a child abuse or neglect referral.

2. All children involved in adoption should be eligible for subsidies to aid the family in supporting and sustaining placements.

Ninety-five percent (95%) of all adopted children receive subsidy, whether legal, maintenance (board payment), medical, or other. Many of these needs are identified prior to the adoption of the child.

3. Concern was expressed that support for post-secondary education (like the YAP for foster children) and medical services for adopted children beyond the age of 18 need to be addressed.

Unfortunately the agency has no provision for such a service. Subsidies, once identified, are given to adopted families for needs such as the one mentioned in question # 16.

### **Beauregard Parish**

#### **Membership**

John Marcello  
City Savings Bank

Ron Hebert  
Beauregard Parish School  
Board

Don Wells  
CASA

Rev. Alan Knuckles  
Pleasant Hill Baptist Church

Jeanne Faciane

Robert McCullough  
Beauregard Parish Sheriff  
Department

Monya Gott  
Kid's Company Daycare

Terri O'Hara  
Beaucare

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### **2002 Activities**

The Beauregard Parish CRP had several focuses during the 2002 calendar year. The first was their 2<sup>nd</sup> annual “Hope for Beauregard Kids” to help create awareness of child abuse and neglect during April, Child Abuse Prevention Month. The second was determining if there was a need for mandatory reporter training, particularly for area childcare centers. The third focus was deciding that the panel needed to return to the original purpose of the CRP’s, which is to review DSS/OCS policy and make recommendations.

### **Recommendations:**

The panel decided that they would continue with the annual “Hope for Beauregard Kids” to promote prevention and awareness. The panel also found that there was a need for mandatory reporter training, but that it was project that Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana (PCAL), in collaboration with DSS/OCS could pursue, rather than the panel itself.

### **2003 Activities**

- Sponsored the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual “Hope for Beauregard Kids during April for Child Abuse Prevention Month. This was a transformation year for the panel, with the focus on gaining sustainable membership. The panel devoted two (2) of its meetings to working with the State CRP liaison, Anthony Ellis, to this task.

### **Recommendations/Future Plans**

- The panel did not have any specific recommendations toward DSS/OCS policy or procedures.

### **Future Plans**

- Become better educated on DSS/OCS policies and procedures to facilitate panel recommendations that would benefit children and families.
- Educate the public about the DSS/OCS, as well as the prevalence of child abuse and neglect.
- Review cases, policy and procedure to determine gaps in our community and attempt to address these issues to further benefit children and families.
- Maintain membership in the panel by diligently working on all of the above so that members feel as though their contribution is valuable.

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## Rapides Parish CRP

### Membership

Sara Alford  
Linda Bordelon  
Lillie Evans  
Martha Kendick  
Beth Lord Whittington

Stacy Bender  
Sarah Brame  
Arthur Johnson  
Linda McCobbie

Gary Billingsley  
Marian Brian  
Michael Johnson  
Susan Ford Fiser

### 2002 Activities:

Foster Care, the program and its policy was the focus of the Rapides CRP for the 2002 calendar year. Issues addressed include the following:

- The panel was informed in detail as to the method by which Quality Assurance reviews agency cases.
  - Quality Assurance forms and quarterly statistics were reviewed and discussed
  - Review CPI case closure rates.
  - The panel was advised and discussed that DSS/OCS had recognized and changed the policy regarding dental checkups for foster children, as the old policy conflicted with the federal policy
- Discussed whether an ethics policy should be drafted and determined that according to the ethics code, a panel member only had to declare involvement with a client and were not required to recluses themselves.
- Discussed the issue of assisting DSS/OCS in locating physicians for sexual abuse exams.

### 2003 Activities:

The panel met 4 times in 2003. The following items were discussed/undertakened during that time.

- Viewed DSS/OCS presentation re: national accreditation (Council on Accreditation).
- Participated in the accreditation review process as stakeholders.
- Panel met and dialogued with a Council On Accreditation Representatives from
- Discussed OCS passing the accreditation process.

### Recommendations:

There were no recommendations from this panel toward DSS/OCS policy and procedure.

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## Covington Region CRP

Participated with COA and Federal CFSR Reviews of the work of OCS.

### **Membership**

Terrie Martin, R.N.  
Livingston Parish Health Unit

Cindy Richard  
Washington Parish School Board

Sarah Kent, LCSW  
Retiree/St. Helena Parish School  
Board, Pupil Appraisal

H. Gene Richard  
Pastor, Hillcrest Baptist

Ila Dietrich, CASA Director  
Youth Service Bureau of St. Tammany Parish

Martha Green, Panel Chair  
Junior League of Greater Covington

Dawn Mabry, M.D.  
North Oaks Hospital

Jean Voohrees Director  
New Horizons Youth Service  
Bureau

### **Activities**

Covington Parish CRP met a total of six times in 2003. Some of the topics discussed include the following:

### **2002 Recommendations/Responses**

- OCS at the State level should encourage the Louisiana State Board of Education to require that schools report children's non-return to school to the State Board. In doing so, we recommend that OCS and the State Board of Education develop legal lines of communication for the State Board of Education to transfer information to OCS regarding children under OCS supervision who don't return/return to school, developing a statewide tracking mechanism of the whereabouts of children at risk who may be moved around by their caregivers.

There is currently no agreement with the State Board of Education around this issue and the agency realizes that both, the agency and the State Board of Education, have separate processes to deal with this concern. If the agency were involved with the family and depending on safety and risk issues, the agency would make attempts to locate the child/family. A child not attending school is not in itself alone a DSS/OCS abuse & neglect report. DSS/OCS workers frequently visit children at school who are in our foster care and family service caseloads. These visits provide opportunities to meet school personnel as well as identify our involvement with the child(ren). However, information sharing is still limited due to the confidential nature of our cases. Often time these contacts have provided a safety net for children involved with the agency. Teachers

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are mandated reporters and tend to report their concerns about these children when they know there is agency involvement.

- That OCS at the State level encourage the State Board of Medical Examiners to send a written reminder to physicians regarding mandated reporting of suspicion/evidence of child neglect and abuse, clarifying by whom and to whom the report is to be made—that the report is to be made first-hand by the physician and it is to be made directly to OCS. It should be clearly explained that it is insufficient to report to medical support staff or hospital social services. The written reminder should emphasize that the consequences of not doing so include subjection to medical license forfeiture.

DSS/OCS is currently working on number of public awareness strategies targeting the general public and mandated reporters. DSS/OCS State Office plans to begin a dialogue with the State Medical Society and devise a strategy on how to reach out to local medical societies and physicians. Lawsuits and court appearances are some of the concerns of physician in reporting abuse/neglect. A mandated reporter who fails to report a suspected case of child abuse/neglect is subject to criminal prosecution under R.S. 14:403 of the Louisiana's Children's code.

- That OCS at the State level develop a public information campaign targeting mandated reporters and the legal obligation to report first-hand, not using support staff to do so.

OCS is currently working on number of public awareness strategies targeting the general public and mandated reporters. OCS and the Department of Education are working together to develop/implement training for teachers and prospective teachers on reporting child abuse and neglect. Legislation (Senate Bill 797) passed during the 2003 legislative session mandating that students majoring in education receive instructions on mandated reporting prior to receiving teacher certification. This collaboration is also looking at criteria for monitoring training in universities for student teachers, mandate in-service training for teachers, mandate that school districts' policies and procedures comply with the law, and monitor the creation and distribution of materials.

Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana (PCAL) has developed a video around child abuse and neglect which we are also studying for use. In addition we are coordinating these efforts into a state wide public education plan that will provide opportunities for the general public to consistently become educated about the agency and lend to more realistic and accurate public perception of it's programs, services, and limitations.

- That OCS at the State level explore the legal avenues allowing Child Protection Alerts to be entered into the wants and warrants system of law enforcement.

This recommendation was referred to the Department's Bureau of General Counsel. There are differences between warrants and investigation into child abuse and neglect. DSS Bureau of General Counsel is recommending that they explore this issue further, as it involves multi-levels of law enforcement as well as the judicial system, which is the

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authorizing agent for warrants, and learning the current processes/criteria in existence for wants/warrants. OCS will provide a response after further exploration has been completed.

- That OCS at the state level work to arrange within bounds of confidentiality that all appropriate State computers, e.g., welfare, etc. is alerted of a Child Protection Alert on a family.

ACCESS (A Comprehensive Enterprise Social Services System) which is intended to encompass the design, development, testing and implementation of a web-oriented statewide-automated information system primarily associated with the Child Welfare program within the Office of Community Services (OCS), and the Childcare and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) programs within the Office of Family Support (OFS) could make such a request possible. A workgroup has been established to examine what information can be shared within the Department of Social Services.

- That OCS at the State level seek legal access to the Louisiana Computer Criminal History (LCCH) system, allowing designated staff a more comprehensive picture of the possible criminal background of caretakers/prospective caretakers as well as their household members.

DSS/OCS proposed draft legislation around this issue during the 2003 legislative session, however a departmental decision was made not to pursue it, in lieu of the many other pressing issues at that time. DSS/OCS resubmitted the draft for consideration during the 2004 legislative session. The legislation recently passed and is awaiting the governor's signature

- Due to the crucial need for confirmation of parental progress toward reunification and the protection and safety of children, that OCS at the State level reconsider the recent change in policy regarding the non-funding of parental drug screens, and once again fund this critical step in the protection of Louisiana's children.

DSS/OCS allows for this process through each region's client support budget. There are funds set aside for substance abuse treatment, etc. Each region is given the autonomy and discretion around how much of these funds will be used for this component of substance abuse treatment.



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## 2003 Recommendations/Responses

- That SECURE Plan proposed to reorganize the OCS regions not be allowed to disrupt/divide OCS Region IX in any way.

The final report for SECURE's two year study project recommended bold and practical strategies to reduce the cost of government, improve government services, and devise a plan to carry the state of Louisiana into the twenty-first century. At this time the plan is still being studied, along with the "No Wrong Door" legislation and has afforded the opportunity for all affected agencies to offer feedback and suggestions around how its recommendations may be advanced/implemented. Our staff has been involved in that dialog. There has been no decision made to move forward on the issue in question at this time.

- That greater focus on the benefits of enrollment in the OCS Young Adult Program (YAP) be made within the curriculum of the Statewide OCS Independent Living Classes which are conducted for children in foster care at age 16, and that stronger educational awareness of the benefits of continued OCS services through YAP be strongly incorporated into the OCS Independent Living Classes.

The Agency is currently placing greater emphasis of the benefits of the YAP program to eligible foster children. In addition to the efforts of the caseworker, there have been many adjunctive resources developed to reinforce YAP services. Some of those resources include the following: development of a fact sheet to be given to new foster parents about the benefits of the program, the State Office YAP Program Manager and independent providers of the services meet periodically with the youth to explain the program and answer questions, and finally the Foster Care Youth Advisory Board has developed a handbook, currently in circulation for comments, addressing the benefits of the YAP program. The handbook will be completed in the next few weeks and will be provided to every child in foster care.

- That due to the continued crucial need for confirmation of parental progress toward reunification and the protection and safety of children, that OCS at the State level reconsider the change in policy regarding the non-funding of parental drug screens, and once again fund this critical step in the protection of Louisiana's children.

There appears to be some confusion about the funding for drug screens. OCS allows for this process through each region's client support budget. . Each region is given the autonomy and discretion around how much of these funds will be used for this component of substance abuse screening.

- That the recommendations of various OCS Citizen Review Panels around the state, as submitted and outlined in the Panel's Annual Report, be reviewed in a timely manner, with responses given to the Panels by the following November 1<sup>st</sup>, in order that the Panels may determine if any previous recommendations should be repeated in the upcoming

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annual reports and if any current recommendations should be amended. The all-volunteer Citizen's Review Panels deserve follow-up to their recommendations and concerns, made in the best interest of the highest quality protection of Louisiana's children and services to families.

The agency is truly appreciative of the work of the panels, which are designed to help the agency become stronger—stronger in terms of the services we provide and stronger in terms of our governance and organizational structure. Your dedication provides assurance that the agency delivers effective services that the community needs, with benefits for everyone—from our internal and external stakeholders to the clients we serve.

We will provide a response to all panel recommendations within three (3) months of receipt of the annual report.

**1.10 Children's Justice Act Grant****Legal Reference:**

<p>Legal Reference: Children's Justice and Assistance Act of 1986, as amended, Title I, Section 102, Public Law 99-401; Child Abuse, Domestic Violence, Adoption, and Family Services Act of 1992, Public Law 102-295;</p>
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The Louisiana Children's Justice Task Force is a multi disciplinary group of professionals and community level representatives with knowledge and experience related to the criminal justice system and the issues of child abuse and neglect. The recommendations of the Task Force for expenditures of grant funds are designed to improve the handling of child abuse and neglect cases, particularly cases of child sexual abuse and exploitation, in a manner which limits additional trauma to the child victim. Grants are also awarded to improve the investigation and prosecution of cases of child abuse and neglect and the handling of suspected child abuse and neglect related fatalities.

- Assisted in sponsoring, an annual statewide child welfare conference, entitled "Together We Can." Participants have included judges, district attorneys, multidisciplinary team professionals, OCS program and legal staff, and community representatives who deal with the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect cases.
- Allocated funds to the Court Appointed Special Advocates Programs (CASA). CASA programs recruit volunteers and train them to represent children in the judicial process.
- Allocated funds to support the Children's Advocacy Centers (CAC), where child friendly forensic interviews are conducted and supported the statewide Children's Advocacy Centers of Louisiana (CACLA).
- Supported a Mediation pilot project in the Orleans and Jefferson Parish Juvenile Courts to demonstrate the efficacy of this form of alternative dispute resolution in reducing the average length of stay of children in Foster Care.
- Allocated funding for the "Family Group Decision Making" model. This model promotes the development of case plans with more family input.
- Allocated funding to support the Louisiana Child Death Review Panel. Assisted in the process to establish panels in all regions of the State, thus promoting the investigation of child deaths and ways to prevent situations, which result in child deaths. Sponsored training for local child death investigation panel members.
- Allocated funding for the development of an "Infant Team" program model to promote the handling of child abuse and neglect cases for young children.

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- Allocated funding for specialized training and resource materials regarding the investigation and prosecution of child abuse/neglect cases for OCS state attorneys, judges, district attorneys, public defenders, OCS program staff, and law enforcement officers.
- Sponsored research of the child protection system and made recommendations regarding laws dealing with child abuse.
- Organized an annual seminar for the Children's Justice Task Force members to develop a comprehensive assessment and plan.
- Monitored contracts funded through the Children's Justice Act Grant and conducted on-site reviews to insure compliance with grant guidelines and to promote quality services.
- Allocated funding to promote the "Safe Place for New Borns" campaign to educate the public about safe havens.

**1.11 John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program and Education and Training Vouchers Program**

With the implementation of the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999, the name of the Independent Living Skills Program was changed to the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP). Many programmatic changes occurred due to the changes in the law and CFCIP permitted the Office of Community Services (OCS) to offer services to more youth.

Youth eligible for CFCIP services included youth up to age 21 years who were likely to remain in foster care until age 18 and youth who have aged out of foster care. OCS changed the lower age limit for receiving services from 16 years to 15 years. Eligibility for services was no longer dependent on Title IV-E eligibility. CFCIP funds up to 30% were available to pay for room and board for youth 18 up to age 21 years. The Office of Community Services was already providing services including room and board in the Young Adult Program with state funding to youth ages 18 up to 21 years before the implementation of CFCIP; therefore, OCS used CFCIP funds for room and board for youth ages 18 up to 21 years to supplement the state funding when the state funding was exhausted and helped expand the time period for entry into the program.

OCS supervised the administration of the State's CFCIP and Education and Training Vouchers Program (ETV). Payments to the State were used for the purpose of conducting and providing (directly or under contract with local governmental entities or private organizations) the activities and services required to carry out the programs involved. The identification number for OCS is 726000800.

Betty Becker, Child Welfare Specialist 5, was and continues to be the contact person for the CFCIP in Louisiana. Her address is the Office of Community Services, P.O. Box 57149, New Orleans, LA 70157 and her telephone number is (504) 568-8003. Her fax number is (504) 568-7491 and her email address is bbecker@dss.state.la.us.

OCS contracted with private providers to deliver services funded by CFCIP during the federal fiscal years 2000-2004. The CFCIP contractors provided the following services and activities for the fiscal years 2000-2004:

- Establishment of outreach programs designed to attract individuals who are eligible to participate in the program;
- Development with each participant a written transitional independent living plan which is based on an assessment of needs, and which is incorporated into the individual case plan;
- Training in daily living skills such as budgeting, locating and maintaining housing, preventive health activities and career planning;
- Services designed to enable participants to secure a high school diploma, its equivalent, higher educational opportunities and appropriate vocational training or employment;
- Educational/vocational, individual and group counseling;

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- Provision of financial, housing, counseling, employment, education and other appropriate support and services to former foster care recipients 18 years and older up to 21 years of age;
- Provision of support services and assistance designed to improve each participant's transition;
- Integration and coordination of services otherwise available to participants and provision of transportation to services when needed;
- Youth Advisory Boards to provide opportunities for Positive Youth Development;
- Specialized training and consultation for foster parents and other child care providers to build skills in working with this specific population of foster children;
- Training of foster care staff on assessment, case planning, and implementation of independent living plans for foster children;
- Provision of a system for tracking expenditures and program outcomes to assure accountability;
- Assessment of existing programmatic and systemic barriers to the successful transition of a youth into independent living; and
- Provision of vouchers for education and training, including post secondary education to youth who have aged out of foster care.
- Outreach recruiting by the CFCIP providers has been successful in increasing the number of youth served.

A written individual transitional independent living services plan has been developed with each youth based on the initial needs assessment and the plan is incorporated into the case plan for the individual. In 2001, the CFCIP providers changed from using the Daniel Memorial Independent Living Assessment for Life Skills Assessment to the Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment which is used as a pre-test to assess the youth's initial needs and as a post-test to measure the youth's progress.

CFCIP providers continued to offer the same array of daily living skills training during the time period. The training encompassed assistance with budgeting/money management, housing, career planning, employment preparation, education, communication, personal care, human sexuality, consumer awareness, safety and community resources and other services designed to enable participants to secure a high school diploma, its equivalent, higher educational opportunities and appropriate vocational training or employment. CFCIP providers also offered

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counseling for youth in the program. CFCIP providers gave youth opportunities for positive role models as part of their CFCIP program in many ways.

The CFCIP providers continued to integrate and coordinate the services for youth in Louisiana by their community networking efforts. Information about and referral to any other needed source of community services was an essential component provided by the CFCIP programs.

Before the CFCIP legislation, OCS had provided services such as room and board, educational or vocational, clothing and other support services to former foster care youth ages 18 years up to 21 years old in the Young Adult Program. When a foster child aged out of foster care at age 18, he or she could voluntarily participate in the Young Adult Program in order to continue educational or vocational training. The youth and the Agency signed a contract specifying the services needed, roles and responsibilities of the parties. A continuum of appropriate living arrangements were provided such as foster family homes, supervised apartments, college dormitories and independent apartment living with state funds.

Admission to the Young Adult Program was expanded in 2000. Previously, the youth was required to contract at age 18 when they aged out of care. Youth may now contract to participate in the Young Adult Program within six months of leaving care and may return after leaving the Young Adult Program within six months. CFCIP funds were also utilized to pay for room and board for any youth in the Young Adult Program when the Young Adult Program's budget was exhausted. Less than 30 percent of the allotment of CFCIP federal funds was utilized to pay for room for former foster children ages 18 up to 21 years.

In addition to the previously mentioned services, OCS received TANF funding for the federal fiscal year 2001-2002 and 2002-2003. With this additional TANF funding in 2001-2002, youth moving into their own apartments received a \$1500 maximum startup costs for furniture and household items, and \$500 maximum for deposits for the apartment, water and telephone deposits. Utility deposits were paid with LIHEAP funds. Youth also received a \$525 per month stipend for rent and living expenses for four months with TANF funds and the regular board rate after the first four months with state funds. Youth transitioning to supervised apartments or college dormitories also received a \$300 stipend for startup costs. These TANF funded services ended in September 2003. After September 2003, the startup up funds for youth in apartments, supervised apartments, and dormitories was funded with CFCIP.

Additional services funded by TANF in the year 2001-2002 included a mentoring program, transportation stipends for youth if working at least part time, vocational evaluations and computer training; and, a personal computer for youth attending college, accepted to college or planning to go to college in the near future. The mentoring program ended in September 2003 and the other services ended in September 2002.

The funding for the first time for the Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) program was approved on July 31, 2003. Eight of the CFCIP providers submitted proposals to deliver ETV services. Proposals were reviewed and contracts were executed to contract for the provision of

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ETV services in the State. In August and September 2003, an application packet, educational plan, and reporting forms were developed for uniform implementation of the program.

Eligible youth included youth ages 16 up to 21 years old who were eligible for services under CFCIP including youth likely to remain in foster care until age 18 and former foster care recipients who aged out of foster care, youth adopted from foster care after attaining the age of 16 who were enrolled in a postsecondary education or training program as defined in section 101 and 102 of the Higher Education Act, making satisfactory progress toward completion of that program and who have not attained 23 years of age. Youth were also eligible who were participating in the CFCIP/ETV program on the date they attained 21 years of age until they attain 23 years of age as long as they were enrolled in a postsecondary education or training program as defined in section 101 and 102 of the Higher Education Act and making satisfactory progress toward completion of that program.

Post secondary educational services for youth under the age of 18 were funded by a combination of federal funds, Title XX, Title IV-B, Title IV- E and state funding. Post secondary educational assistance for youth in the Young Adult Program, who are 18 years old up to 21 years old was funded by Title XX. The ETV funds were used to supplement costs of post secondary education not covered by these sources of funding.

Youth participated in developing their own educational plan with CFCIP providers. For youth in post secondary education and training, the youth proved his financial need by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to establish the student's cost of attendance (COA) as defined in section 472 of the Higher Education Act and expected family contribution (EFC), if the student was working. The student's financial need was calculated by the financial aid administrator at the post secondary institution by taking the cost of attendance, subtracting the EFC if applicable, Pell Grant aid, aid from other sources as scholarships, etc.

The student provided documentation of the cost of attendance, EFC and financial need as determined by the financial aid administrator. Any aid from OCS was also subtracted from the youth's cost of attendance to determine the youth's financial need. The youth was awarded an education and training voucher assistance in the amount of the student's need, which did not exceed the lesser of \$5,000, per year or the actual cost of attendance to the extent that ETV funds were available. Since the inception of the program thirty youth have received ETV funds.

ETV funds were used to pay for tuition, dormitory, meal ticket, books, supplies, fees, transportation, child care, tutoring, personal computer or any other cost of attendance. Off campus living expenses included rent, utilities, food and other living expenses.

OCS coordinated with other post secondary education and training programs in Louisiana to ensure that the total amount of educational assistance to youth under ETV and other federal programs did not exceed the total cost of attendance as defined in section 472 of the Higher Education Act of 1965. OCS advised each post secondary education or training program of any ETV awarded to a youth in order to prevent any duplication of benefits.



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The annual youth conference was held every year during this time period at a university to encourage youth to continue their education. The conferences continued to be the highlight of the year and youth have contributed to the planning of the conference, speakers and topics. The Youth Conference was held at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette in 2000. It was held at Louisiana Technical University in Ruston in 2001, and at the University of New Orleans in 2002. The conference was held at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge 2003 and 2004. In 2004, 90 youth attended the conference.

In 2000, the youth participating in CFCIP established Youth Advisory Boards with the assistance of the CFCIP providers across the State. These Youth Advisory Boards presented youth with opportunities for positive role models and leadership training. A Youth Advisory Board wrote a handbook for youth coming into care, which will be distributed to youth as they enter foster care. Youth worked with the Agency toward achieving accreditation. The Youth Advisory Board completed writing the Youth Handbook in September 2003.

The Youth Advisory Board has been involved in many projects, such as the agency's COA process, doing community service projects at long term care facilities, and planning the annual Youth Conference. Three youth are also serving on a joint committee created by a resolution of the Louisiana House of Representatives to study the current law and regulations governing children in foster care in Louisiana and make recommendations for changes to the Louisiana Legislature.

During this time period, a Positive Youth Development approach became a priority for CFCIP. All CFCIP providers were trained in Positive Youth Development. Starting in 2002, the CFCIP providers received contracts to train foster care workers and foster parents on Positive Youth Development. The training continued in 2003 and 2004. There were 341 persons that received the Positive Youth Development Training. This included foster parents and staff. An amount of the funds have not been utilized during the term of the contracts. The Agency is considering extensions of the contracts, which will allow for scheduling additional sessions and provide additional opportunities for training.

OCS continued to collect data to improve service delivery. Follow-up questionnaires continued to be given to youth who have completed the CFCIP every year during the fiscal years 2000-2004 to collect data on outcomes and collect their suggestions for service improvements. Data has also been collected on pre-test and post-test scores on the Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment each year to evaluate each CFCIP program's effectiveness. The assessment of independent living skills was completed before and after youth attend the independent living skills classes. In the years before 2002, the Danial Memorial Independent Living Assessment for Life Skills was the instrument used to measure the increase in the skills. From 1998 to 2000, the average percent of increase was 28% and in 2001 – 2002 it rose to 31%. In 2002, the assessment instrument changed to the Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment tool. Ansel Casey Life Skills Assessment measured an average of 70% increase in 2002 – 2003.

The OCS CFCIP Child Welfare Specialist is the liaison to the CFCIP providers to assure accountability. The Child Welfare Specialist executed the contracts, reviewed the monthly cost

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reports and evaluated the programs. CFCIP providers were required to submit quarterly reports regarding services and clients served. Foster care workers received quarterly progress reports on youth participating in the program from the CFCIP providers and they monitored youth's progress in the program.

In order to assess the CFCIP providers' individual program performance and compliance with state and federal requirements, the CFCIP Child Welfare Specialist used the Independent Living Skills Program Monitoring Instrument in her review of CFCIP providers each year during this time period.

The OCS CFCIP Child Welfare Specialist was also the liaison to the Louisiana Coalition of Independent Living Skills Providers. The Coalition is composed of all the CFCIP providers in the State. The Coalition met quarterly as a forum to exchange information, define barriers and problems and develop a unified approach to solving problems in CFCIP programs.

Coordination continued during this time period with both the public and private sectors in order to maximize services to promote independence of foster children. An excellent example of this coordination was the previously discussed TANF funding. During the year of 2002, OCS also entered into an agreement with the Casey Family Program in Baton Rouge to provide additional services for foster children by using the wraparound approach to develop plans for youth and their families building on their strengths to address their needs and reach their goals.

Flexible funding was provided for direct services that were not covered by any other state or federal source of funding.

OCS continued to coordinate with other programs and organizations for youth, such as, the Transitional Living Program in Louisiana, Baton Rouge Association for Transitional Living, HUD, Department of Health and Hospitals, Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities, Department of Education, Office of Mental Health, Office of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Department of Labor, Louisiana Vocational Rehabilitation, residential and supervised apartment program providers, American Indian tribes, Foster Parents Associations, CFCIP youth participants to maximize services for youth in foster care. Coordination included activities, such as interagency agreements, interagency committees, opportunities for programmatic comment and training opportunities.

As the previous summary has described, OCS has complied with the program certification requirements of Section 477(b) of the Act during the federal fiscal years of 2000-2004.

**1.12 Community Consultation and Collaboration**

The Agency has continued to seek input from stakeholders for development of the plan and improvement of agency services. The following information details some of the actions taken to obtain and use input from stakeholders on the Child and Family Services Plan.

- The Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR) was available for review in each regional OCS office and at the state library and its 31 repositories statewide. Requests are made for copies of the Reports from citizens after review in libraries.
- The 2003 APSR was submitted to select stakeholders along with a questionnaire seeking feedback. Two questionnaires were returned from stakeholders, who gave the Agency the highest rating on various elements, such as the plan's effective approach of addressing issues surrounding safety, permanency, and well-being.
- Select Independent Living providers were given the Final Report and 5 Year Plan for the John H. Chafee Independence Program for review. Comments received were complimentary and no recommendations for improvement were made.
- Federal Stakeholder Consultation

The Planning and Accreditation Section met with the representative of the Federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF) on December 5, 2003. One topic discussed was the organization of the Consolidated Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) for 2005-2009. An outline containing three main headings was presented. It included, "Who Are We," "Where Are We" and "Where Are We Going." The ACF representative felt this was a workable approach. Other topics covered included the need for information on the healthy marriage, responsible fatherhood, faith-based initiatives, adoption promotion and a review of accomplishments over the last five-years. Connections between the Program Improvement Plan (PIP) and the CFSP were defined, such as including in the CFSP different goals for improving services than those named in the PIP. This consultation in 2003 and 2004 was similar as that occurring in previous years.

- Public Hearing

On March 11, 2004, the Agency held a public hearing for the CFSP. An extensive effort to increase public participation was undertaken prior to the hearing. These efforts included: a public notice regarding the purpose of the hearing was published in the Potpourri section of the Louisiana Register and in the seven leading newspapers of the State; the four federally recognized American Indian tribes were notified of the hearing and also sent copies of the APSR for 2003; stakeholders were sent invitations and a copy of the 2003 APSR along with a questionnaire about the plan; and stakeholders were also told of the hearing as they attended meetings with agency personnel. In an effort to

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increase participation from staff and stakeholders in areas away from Baton Rouge, the public hearing was conducted via video conferencing. These efforts resulted in the attendance of 10 individuals in Baton Rouge and in several regional offices.

Comments, questions, and recommendations were offered as a result of the Agency's efforts. The following provides a brief review of the statements and suggestions and agency responses:

- Question #1-Does the fact that a referral is made to the District Attorney's office on valid reports of child abuse and/or neglect affect client participation in services?  
Agency Response - The clients are aware of this practice, but the participation in services by clients does not appear connected to concerns over District Attorney action.
- Question #2-When children are placed with relatives, are they provided financial assistance?  
Agency Response - The Agency does have available limited funds, but there are no formal funding processes for this.
- Question #3- Do therapeutic foster homes provide a higher level of care than regular homes?  
Agency Response - The Agency is planning to change the way foster homes are classified and is planning to use a system called Level of Care. The concept is to base foster care payments on the level of services provided to foster children.
- Recommendation #4-OCS should retain an employee to write federal and private grants.  
Agency Response - No action has been taken on this recommendation because OCS does not see useful application for it at this time.
- Recommendation #5- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds could be combined to receive matching funds from foundations.  
Agency Response - OCS uses its TANF funds as part of the general budget, which would make it difficult to match with foundation money.
- Recommendation #6- OCS should provide its staff and stakeholders with day - long training sessions on selected topics.  
Agency Response - At present, our training staff is fully engaged in its training program and will continue to offer day-long sessions in 2004. Finally, with the Agency budget on a "stand still," costs of such additional training may make it impossible at this time.

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- Recommendation #7- Requests For Proposals (RFP) should consider proposals from individuals with degrees other than the MSW.  
Agency Response – Agency will consider where applicable and allowed for by accreditation standards.
- Recommendation #8- OCS should look at diversifying its funds. Federal funds may be available for matching with 10% and 25% of state funds.  
Agency Response – Agency will consider this but implementation depends on state revenues budget, and other funds that are available for acquisition.
- Recommendation #9- There should be more detailed representation of services offered through Foster and Adoptive Family Resource Centers.  
Agency Response – Will take under advisement for the negotiation of new contracts.
- Comment #1- CASA has requested that OCS add them as a referral source in cases where an investigation uncovers problems but the report is determined to be invalid or valid with services closed.  
Agency Response – Agency takes under advisement and consideration. Liability, legal issues and confidentiality are concerns.
- Comment #2- The disproportionality between the number of males and females, and black and white children awaiting adoption is troublesome.  
Agency Response – Agency is aware of this problem and will take necessary action.

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## **1.13 Transfers of Custody from State Child Protection System to State Department of Corrections, Office of Youth Development**

The Department of Social Services, Office of Community Services (OCS) data shows the following children who were in the care (custody) and were transferred to the supervision (custody) of the state juvenile justice system (DOC). Context information about the source of this information and how the reporting population is defined is provided.

Regional Analysis of Children Transferred from OCS to DOC:

<b>July 1, 2003 to June 1, 2004</b>	
<b>Region of Child's Domicile</b>	<b>Number of Children For Whom Custody Was Transferred</b>
01. Orleans Region OCS	2
02. Baton Rouge Region OCS	2
03. Thibodaux Region OCS	3
04. Lafayette Region OCS	4
05. Lake Charles Region OCS	1
06. Alexandria Region OCS	0
07. Shreveport Region OCS	3
08. Monroe Region OCS	4
09. Covington Region OCS	4
10. Jefferson Region OCS	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>26</b>

<b>July 1, 2002 to June 30, 2003</b>	
<b>Region of Child's Domicile</b>	<b>Number of Children For Whom Custody Was Transferred</b>
01. Orleans Region OCS	5
02. Baton Rouge Region OCS	2
03. Thibodaux Region OCS	2
04. Lafayette Region OCS	5
05. Lake Charles Region OCS	0
06. Alexandria Region OCS	2
07. Shreveport Region OCS	4
08. Monroe Region OCS	5
09. Covington Region OCS	8
10. Jefferson Region OCS	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>36</b>

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The statistics reflect OCS database information on children who changed custody by region and by year. The data is for children whose case was opened in the State's Foster Care system and who had their custody transferred to the Department of Corrections during the given years. The Department of Corrections has responsibility for children adjudicated to the Office of Youth Development, the state's juvenile justice system. The information presented in the charts on the previous page is obtained through a Tracking Information and Payment System (TIPS) report and a "Webfocus Report" with a run date of June 1, 2004. Information on years prior to the State Fiscal Year of 2002 – 2004 were not available.

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### **1.14 Louisiana Children's Trust Fund**

For 2004, the Louisiana Children's Trust fund provided a variety of services to citizens of Louisiana. On several fronts, different services were made available. This report includes the following final reports:

Statewide Network and Expansion of Core Services  
Technical Assistance and Program Evaluation  
Comprehensive Needs Assessment and Peer Review and Parent Leadership  
Development of Systemic Change, Interdisciplinary Service Delivery and Innovative Funding Mechanisms

#### **Statewide Network and Expansion of Core Services**

The Louisiana Children's Trust Fund (LCTF) continued funding core services as well as the expansion of community-based, prevention-focused, family resource and support programs.

The Trust Fund's support serves as catalysts for development of grass roots, community based programs throughout the State. The statewide networks support those programs that address special needs and high-risk populations with the continued expansion of family resource centers and respite programs. LCTF priorities are those programs, which included either grass roots or rural outreach services.

The LCTF Annual Report included all programs, services and numbers served as well as funds spent. The types of programs and numbers served for 2000 – 2004 include:

PROGRAM	NUMBER OF PROGRAMS	NUMBER SERVED
Life Skills and Safety Programs	81 programs	6,896 children
Parenting Support and Education	66 programs	43,719 parents
Hospital and/or Home Visitation	21 programs	1,510 families
Public Awareness and Education	36 programs	748,294 adults
Continued Education and Training	42 programs	8,457 professionals/volunteers

In addition, the Community-based Family Resource and Support Funds (CBFRS) provided support to families and children in Louisiana. Some key achievements are:

- The expansion of family resource centers into grass-roots community centers and church based settings. An excellent example of a church-based center is the Saint Catherine Community Center, which includes tutorial and after-school programs for the youth, Creative Anger Management and Effective Black Parenting for the parents, and collaborative programs for special targeted populations such as teen moms.



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- New programs being offered in addition to parent support and respite services are safe visitation programs and fatherhood initiatives.
- Centers continued to provide services in homeless and domestic violence shelters; housing developments, higher education facilities and community centers with expansion into grass-roots community centers and church-based settings.
- Special needs networks included the statewide Family Helping Families and Extra Mile programs for families with children with special needs.
- Programs include The First Touch Program, a hospital and home visitation program for parents with special needs children; Kids on the Block puppet program; and, family resource centers, which include special need family support and respite services.
- Special needs and diverse populations addressed with LCTF funds included foster care and adoptive parents, foster care children, battered women programs and homeless shelters.
- The incarcerated adult programs included parenting education and family support as well as mentoring programs for the children with incarcerated parents.
- Centers continued to provide services in homeless and domestic violence shelters; housing developments; higher education facilities and community centers. As with primary prevention programs, services were provided to the entire population, but some targeted populations included teen parents, adoptive and foster parents, substance abuse clients as well as families with special needs children.
- Family Resource Centers offered parenting support and education programs, which included The Nurturing Program, Active Parenting, Effective Black Parenting and Parents as Teachers models. Also life-skills training for children as well as after-school tutorial, recreational and mentoring programs were provided.
- Respite programs were also offered at a majority of the centers.
- Continued growth and development of a statewide structure of regional support networks through collaboration with Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana (PCAL).
- Regional Networks were responsible for development of local, collaborative, public-private partnerships directed by inter-disciplinary structures with a balance of representatives from public and private sectors, parents, consumers and service providers. These structures provided public awareness of community-based programs and coordinated development of future programs to meet unmet needs of the population. The Children's Trust Fund was directly connected to this network by means of its funding and

oversight of the network directly through monitoring and supervision of the network's operation.

### **Technical Assistance and Program Evaluation**

On-going technical assistance was provided to all LCTF programs. Innovations in the area of technical assistance and program evaluation included the following:

- The technical assistance and public awareness campaign continued using the interactive compact disc for all grantees. The disc included topics such as developing promotional campaigns, defining target populations and messages, evaluations, sample press release and resources available. Grantees were able to access any of the above and download any information needed.
- The LCTF web-site (lctf.org) continued to develop and has become a highly effective means of reaching all populations, grassroots and rural. Through the collaborative partnerships among Children's Trust Fund programs, all programs have access to the Internet. As part of the statewide support contract with PCAL, the Prevent Child Abuse programs throughout the State offered use of their computers and Internet for any LCTF programs without computers.
- Again this year the grant application documents as well as the directions to LCTF's office (for those delivering the grants) were made available on the web-site. All LCTF programs by region are also listed on the web-site. LCTF continued the use of video-conferencing for the grant application workshops. The video-conference sites were expanded to all regions across the State. Video-conferencing allows less travel expenses and better use of time.
- This year the grantees Program Evaluation Reports were submitted through the Internet. Grantees logged-in and entered the data for their programs. Upon submission, the Children's Trust Fund's office received the data and was able to use the data for compilation of its Annual Report. This proved a very efficient use of time and data. The grantees were also able to update the information about their individual programs on the LCTF web-site, thus allowing the web-site to have up-to-date the most current and accurate data.
- Through a contract with Louisiana Association of Non-Profits (LANO), the Children's Trust Fund grantees were offered "Standards of Excellence" training. The topics included: Standards of Accountability, Financial Management, and Fund Development.
- LCTF continued support of other organizations' conferences and workshops. This support was in the form of stipends to allow participants who could not afford to attend the opportunity to participate in these educational opportunities. The conferences included: PCAL, Louisiana Association of Non-Profits, School Based Health Centers, La. National Association of Social Workers and the Foster/Adoptive Parent Association.

Stipends recipients included day-care and Head Start workers, churches and community action agencies staff, and consumers and parents.

### **Comprehensive Needs Assessment & Peer Review and Parent Leadership**

As an integral partner with the State's Early Childhood Comprehensive System (ECCS) Grant, the Children's Trust Fund assisted with the Maximus Comprehensive Needs Assessment of Low-Income Families in Louisiana. The ECCS grant will continue to do a further in-dept needs assessment of services and service gaps for children and families.

LCTF facilitates the development of a peer review process to evaluate the effectiveness of the programs it funds as well as gaps of services of non-funded programs. This process includes the continued use of the statewide regional network structure and the regional collaboration structure in the development of the Children's Trust Fund's State Plan as well as in its funding determinations. Further expansion of the process included a grant with PCAL to facilitate the quarterly regional meetings. These meetings, continued to explore what works and doesn't work, as well as trends that participants are observing.

The three-tier approach of service providers, stakeholders and consumers/parents was used in these meetings. In 2004, mandated reporters were included with providers in the three-tier approach. The peer-review included input from these three identified populations. The stakeholders were from the public services such as health units, child welfare offices, Head Start and schools as well as community organizations such as The United Way. The providers were the private services such as churches and non-profits. The consumers were the recipients of services as well as parents associated with the administrators and providers. All three were integral parts of the peer-review assessments. The process included on the regional level, input from service provider's staff, participants and community stakeholders.

A new collaboration this year was the coordinated involvement of the Citizen Review Panels with the current network of Community Based Family Resources Services (CBFRS) peer reviews. The peer-review process identified priorities and recommendations for services to children and families. Also the peer-review process is done to identify successes and weaknesses as far as priorities and unmet needs. The primary concerns of the peer-review process are peer satisfaction and strengths/weaknesses of services. The peer-review process was not only used for continued insight into programs and services, it was also the basis for the future development of the LCTF programs.

Emphasis was also placed on parental involvement and input into the ongoing development of LCTF process and programs. Teen parents as well as foster parents were also included, and provided different but insightful perspectives that were very useful. LCTF not only required parent leadership roles with the peer review process, but also with its individual grantees. Parents also participated in the grant review process and future development of LCTF programs. Grantees were encouraged to include parents in leadership roles with their organizations as well as in the delivery of their services. LCTF also includes parent in leadership roles in several of the organizations represented on its Board.

**Development of Systematic Change, Interdisciplinary Service Delivery and Innovative Funding Mechanisms**

As the result of the Maximus Comprehensive Needs Assessment, the Select Council on Revenues and Expenditures (SECURE) addressed several gaps in services for children and families. Human service programs are facing challenges with tight fiscal situations and

continued changes. Most children and their families have more than one program need and yet are expected to conform to the constraints of individual human service programs and funding silos.

The Children's Trust Fund played a strong role in the implementation of three efforts that would address SECURE's concerns and have major positive impact on the delivery of services to children and families. CBFRS grantees would also be affected by these three initiatives:

The Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2003  
No Wrong Door Legislation  
Regional 2-1-1 Information and Referral Telephone Systems

The Trust Fund continues to educate its grantees on these initiatives and their implementation. This will continue in the future.

LCTF continued to play an active role in the Governor's Children's Cabinet. The Cabinet included the development of systemic changes necessary for better delivery of services to children and families. This process began several years ago and has continued to progress. The Children's Cabinet has identified specific requirements of prevention programs to further develop a systematic delivery of care to children and families. LCTF has incorporated these as part of their new grant applications. These included not only required documentation of coordination and collaboration of services, but also a description of how the program will supplement existing programs and contribute to the development of a local system of care that would lend itself to development of common intake and eligibility process. LCTF knows it is a lot to ask of our small community-based programs, but we feel if we can start at the grassroots level maybe the outgrowth will eventually lead to the development of a statewide interdisciplinary service delivery.

CBFRS funds have been wisely invested as a means of developing other sources of leveraged funds (i.e. child safety license plates and corporate sponsorships) for Louisiana Children's Trust Fund (LCTF) programs. The child safety license plates is a collaborative effort with the Children's Trust Fund and Louisiana Safe Kids Coalition. The proceeds from the license plates, funds the "Don't Kid Around!" campaign, an educational outreach project to increase public awareness regarding the need for increased use and proper use of child safety seats and seat belts. Unlike other programs, the awareness efforts are targeted toward actual drivers who transport small children in an unsafe and unrestrained manner.

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LCTF hosted the **Prime Time for Parents-"Kidformation" Hour** radio program. This served as a public service to the community providing very useful information for parents. Several corporate sponsorships were developed with the radio show and other community events. These included Women's Hospital and Clear Channel Communications. This year, the Sprint telephone company continued as a new corporate sponsor with the radio show.

This year a "Freedom Run" was held in conjunction with Clear Channel's Kids Fest. Besides receiving the funds, LCTF actively participated in both events. Children's Trust Fund programs were allowed to highlight their programs at the event as well as participate. The event was held Father's Day weekend and was in conjunction with Governor's Fatherhood Initiative Breakfast. The funds received were used for additional radio shows. The radio show continued to be a positive resource in development of future corporate sponsorships and partnership.

**1.15 Missing and Exploited Children Clearinghouse**

The Department of Social Services, Office of Community Services (OCS) administered the Missing and Exploited Children Clearinghouse (Clearinghouse) in the State. The primary function of the clearinghouse has been to facilitate providing information concerning the targeted populations to agencies and parents of children thought to be missing and exploited in the State. Louisiana is believed to be the only State to administer a State Missing and Exploited Children Information Clearinghouse through the state child protection agency. Other states administer these functions and services through the auspices of the state police agency and/or the state Attorney General's Office and provide fiscal authority for search and recovery operations as part of the responsibilities of the administering entities.

Source of this Initiative: The Louisiana Missing and Exploited Children Information Clearinghouse was established by Louisiana Revised Statute 46:1431 as the state's central repository of information on missing and/or exploited children within the State, and, those suspected of interstate travel. OCS was given administrative responsibility for clearinghouse operations. As such, the legislation creating the clearinghouse does not statutorily or fiscally authorize OCS to conduct or have an active role in child search and recovery activities.

Definitions of Target Populations: 1.) A missing child is an individual under 18 years of age who is or is believed to be a temporary or permanent resident of Louisiana, is at a location that cannot be determined by the person's parent or legal custodian, and has been reported missing to a law enforcement agency. 2.) An exploited child is an individual under 18 years of age who has been threatened and/or whose health or welfare has been harmed by any person through non-accidental sexual contact that includes sexual abuse.

OCS Responsibility in Administering the Clearinghouse Functions: As mandated by state law, OCS collected and disseminated information to assist in the location of missing children and the reporting of exploited children to the proper authorities. In particular, the clearinghouse was charged:

- To distribute photographs, bulletins, posters, and other forms of information describing missing children;
- To provide informational materials to law enforcement agencies, parents, and interested citizens;
- To work with other state and international clearinghouses, criminal justice agencies, and law enforcement agencies; and,
- To assist parents in contacting the appropriate law enforcement agency to file a missing child report and to refer parents to appropriate support groups and other resources.

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## Performance/Achievement:

2000

- The clearinghouse initially began its efforts in concert and sponsorship with a corporate sponsor and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC). A multi-media computer system was donated to the Clearinghouse from a corporate sponsor. Essential hardware and software, training, on-going assistance, system updates and routine maintenance along with network access and system usage have been furnished through this vehicle.
- Interface with other systems involved in assistance with missing and exploited children have been forged with the Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement, state police, the Police and Sheriffs' State Associations, Department of Education, and the Louisiana Children's Network.
- Daily monitoring of the state's clearinghouse communications and activities were established and maintained.

2001

- In partnership with FACES, the Louisiana State University Forensic Anthropology and Computer Enhancement Services Laboratory, the Clearinghouse played an active role in establishing the Missing Children Comprehensive Action Program in the East Baton Rouge Parish community. This evolved into a community effort to establish a Child Advocacy Center for the Baton Rouge metropolitan areas. Plans were for the center to open in late 2001 or early 2002.

2002

- In partnership with the Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement, the Louisiana Children's Network website was established. This website continues to be accessible to the general public and provides information for families with missing children. The website features current missing children in Louisiana as supplied by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and linkages to other websites.
- Planning began to include establishing a link between the clearinghouse and local law enforcement through implementation of the LOCATOR system (Lost Child Alert Technology Resource).

2003

- Through the computer system donated to the clearinghouse by a corporate sponsor, the LOCATOR System began to be housed in the clearinghouse and this broadened the capacity to develop, disseminate, and receive poster notifications of missing children.

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2004

- Began closer coordination with OCS state office and field office Foster Care Program staff with incidents involving runaway children in foster care settings. New policies and procedures resulted in more frequent returns of runaway children to the state custody settings.
- Coordinated with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and the Jefferson Parish Coroner's Office to provide training entitled "Internet Solicitation," which was attended by law enforcement staff. "Intervention in Missing Children's Cases" was another training held for both law enforcement personnel and OCS staff. Both groups attended this training with the Jefferson Parish Coroner's Office as the host for this training. Plans are for both training events to be repeated on an annual basis.
- Worked with the Texas Department of Public Safety and the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, Office of Public Health to cooperate with requests from Texas for "birth certificate flags." (When a birth certificate is given a "flag" this means that the certificate is questioned and release of the certificate is restricted pending further investigation in an attempt to determine if the certificate is requested for a possibly missing and/or exploited child.)
- Worked with the local safety council to develop a course on prevention of missing children; also, provided consultation to a local agency interested in developing DNA Kits for children.

This initiative will be continuing in the period of implementation of the 2005-2009 Consolidated Child and Family Services Plan.



**1.16 Court Improvement Program**

In 2002, the Supreme Court contracted for the audit of the Louisiana judiciary to determine overall compliance with the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA). The National Center for State Courts (NCSC) conducted the audit of 18 courts, including all 4 major, metropolitan juvenile courts. Their report was submitted in April 2002. In response to the audit, the Court directed Court Improvement Program (CIP) staff to conduct follow-up site visits to the audited courts and to hold facilitation team meetings with local courts to brainstorm strategies for improved ASFA compliance.

During 2003, site visits to all 18 courts, plus three more, for a total of 21 visits were made. The following are general conclusions from the NCSC audit and the follow-up site visits. These findings will form the basis for CIP strategic planning as follows:

- Many Child in Need of Care (CINC) cases experience delays related to infrequent dates set aside by courts for juvenile matters. This is especially acute in some multi-parish district courts and some city courts.
- Judicial rotation in some courts results in cases being heard by a number of judges over the life of a case. Additionally, in some courts different judges hear different case types (delinquency, Families in Need of Services or FINS cases, etc.) involving the same child or family.
- There is inconsistency among courts as to responsibility for ensuring the timeliness and adequacy of all mandated hearings. Courts need CINC case managers and a uniform, automated case tracking and management system.
- There exists inconsistency from jurisdiction to jurisdiction as to the responsibility for preparing and submitting ASFA-compliant court orders.
- Access to qualified, competent legal representation for children and parents is a major problem statewide. State funding for qualified legal representation for children and parents is overwhelmingly inadequate.
- In most courts, the Office of Community Services (OCS) is largely unrepresented by legal counsel until the filing of a petition to terminate parental rights. OCS should have readily available, continuous legal representation from removal to finalization of the permanent plan for the child. Additionally, many OCS attorneys' caseloads are overwhelmed with the number of terminations, especially in multi-parish districts.

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- The state must have adequate legal representation from the time of removal to make it possible to achieve permanent homes for children within the timetables specified by ASFA. In many jurisdictions, the district attorney's office prosecutes the case through adjudication and, in some areas, into the case review process. OCS attorneys typically handle all termination of parental rights (TPR) proceedings. It is important for attorneys representing the state to seek early TPRs when appropriate, build a strong record at early stages of the case and periodically troubleshoot as the case proceeds. This is most likely when there are specialization and training for attorneys, reasonable caseloads and concerted efforts to recruit and retain strong attorneys.
- The Office of Youth Development (OYD) does not have access to legal counsel.
- Access to mediation and other forms of alternative dispute resolution is very limited.
- Foster and pre-adoptive parents and relative caregivers rarely attend or participate in hearings. Courts vary widely in affording opportunities for foster and pre-adoptive parents and relative caregivers, if at all.
- Some do not always make "reasonable efforts" and "contrary to the welfare" findings in delinquency and FINS cases.
- Courts are not making inquiries as to whether abused and neglected children may be protected under the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA).
- Statewide, the available number of Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children (CASAs) is not adequate to achieve the CASA goal of one CASA per case. In those jurisdictions where they are available, CASA is not always appointed early in the case. Loss of funding from Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) will jeopardize the viability of CASA statewide. CASA presence in some areas of the state may be actually diminished or lost.
- There is no funding for certified interpreters for non-English speaking children and families, resulting in delays.
- Ready access to adequate drug treatment programs and mental health services for parents is largely absent.
- Ready access to resources for cases involving domestic violence is largely absent.

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Other activities of the CIP that occurred during the years in the Final Report would include the following:

1. Attorney Standards

CIP staff have taken the ABA model standards for attorneys representing children in child in need of care cases and revised them pursuant to Louisiana law and terminology. Plans are to ask the Louisiana Supreme Court to “endorse” the model standards as aspirational. CIP staffs are presently using the model attorney standards in all of the CIP conducted attorney trainings.

2. Joint LCIP and Office of Community Services trainings

The major emphasis on joint training between the LCIP and OCS this past year was in the area of mediation. This training has focused on general introduction to the mediation process (the first pilot) with stakeholders, including OCS staff, advanced mediator training and training for attorneys in mediation, including OCS staff attorneys.

3. Integrated Juvenile Justice Information System system modifications

Modifications will web-enable the IJJIS and allow much easier access to courts all over the state. The program will be housed on the Supreme Court’s server, which will allow new modifications and programming trouble-shooting issues to be resolved in just one location.

4. Mandatory reporting of continuances and delays

Courts are continuing to report delays. The most numerous delays occur at the child in need of care adjudication and at the time of the termination of parental rights hearings. This trend is not surprising, as these are the most contested hearings in the process.

5. Collaboration with the Judicial College and the Louisiana State Bar Association to develop an ongoing curriculum for continuing education for judges

Work continues on the development of a curriculum. Some areas being considered are basic ASFA training, understanding of the 4 major ASFA permanency plans, how to determine reasonable efforts when the plan is alternative permanent living arrangement, basic ICWA and applying ASFA in FINS/delinquency cases.

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6. Mediation Pilot Program in Orleans Parish Juvenile Court and Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court

The mediation pilot last year conducted 62 mediations in 44 cases, serving 82 children. A part-time mediation coordinator has been hired in Orleans Parish Juvenile Court, and a full-time mediation coordinator is about to be hired in Jefferson Parish. The primary funder of the project has contracted with an outside evaluator to do the evaluation, which is in process. It was recently learned that CIP has been granted a 6-month no-cost extension of the grant, which will allow for continued collection of data from three full years of operation.

7. New legislation

The most significant new legislation passed last year was that to create a legislative commission to study juvenile law reform in Louisiana, including child in need of care issues. The Louisiana CIP will be involved with the commission as it addresses ASFA-related issues and will make recommendations for reform.

8. Training initiatives/materials

LCIP staff produced a revised set of model ASFA-compliant judgment/order forms, as well as a model for use in FINS/delinquency cases. CIP staff also produced a set of bench cards for judges entitled, "Bench Cards for Essential Judicial Functions in Child in Need of Care Cases."

9. Strategic planning in the CIP Project

The CIP has submitted a revised strategic plan, effective October 1, 2003, in compliance with the recent program instructions.

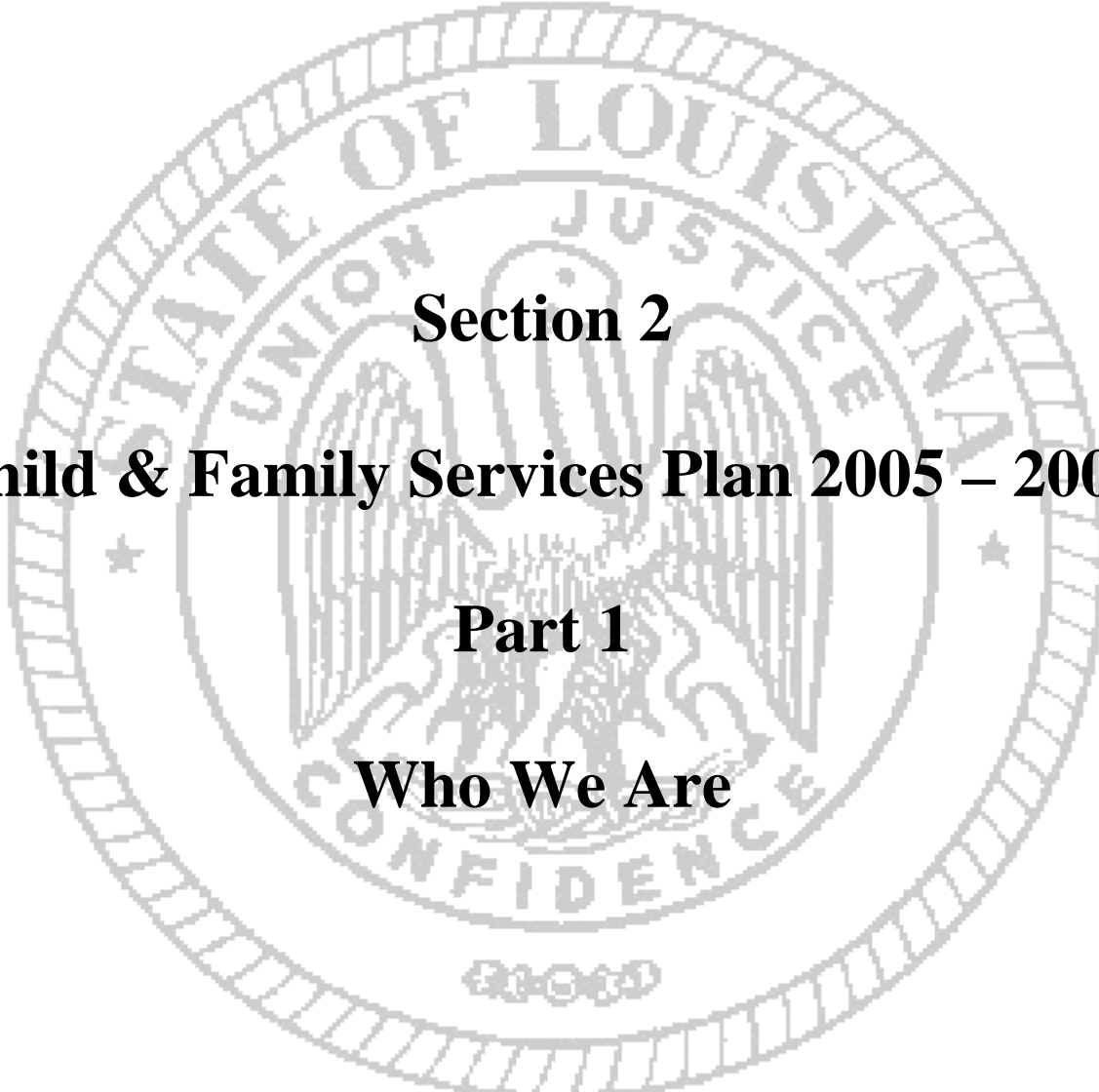
10. PIP involvement and implementation

CIP staff were invited to participate on the development of the PIP and served primarily on the task force that is dealing with adoption within 24 months. CIP involvement was substantial. The CIP strategic plan will be revised in connection with items in Louisiana's Program Improvement Plan.

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Child and Family Services Plan for 2005-2009

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The seal of the State of Louisiana is a large, circular emblem in the background. It features an eagle with wings spread, perched on a shield. The shield is supported by two figures, likely representing Liberty and Justice. The words "STATE OF LOUISIANA" are written in an arc at the top, and "CONFIDENCE" is written in an arc at the bottom. The year "1804" is at the very bottom. The words "UNION JUSTICE" are also visible within the inner circle of the seal.

**Section 2**  
**Child & Family Services Plan 2005 – 2009**  
**Part 1**  
**Who We Are**

**Introduction**

The Louisiana Department of Social Services (DSS), Office of Community Services (OCS) presents the following information for the 2005 – 2009 Consolidated Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP). This plan follows the specific guidance provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children, Youth and Families in Program Instructions of February 2, 2004 (Log No: ACYF-CB-PI-04-01). In accordance with the program instructions, Louisiana has incorporated five major areas in the plan and has reflected on on-going opportunities to implement a system of coordinated, integrated, culturally relevant and family-focused services.

- **Vision** – This sets the goals and “big picture” of the organization.
- **Assessment** – This provides opportunities for the State to develop the picture from data, from analysis and synthesis of information, and to use drawn conclusions to develop and enact new hypothesis and approaches in specific steps to be taken to impact identified areas.
- **Consultation/Coordination** – These are internal and external processes whereby the Agency works to improve and build interventions based on shared insight, expertise, and a collective direction in which the Agency should move.
- **Joint planning** – This reflects the State-to-Federal partnership that is ongoing in the form of discussions, consultation, and negotiation in the development of the CFSP.
- **Training** – Training supports the goals and objectives of the CFSP and provides a means of expanding the partnerships across the State for newly hired and experienced staff members.

OCS, in concert with community stakeholders, has developed this five year plan. These collaborative processes will continue to occur throughout the course of the coming five-year period. Collaboration is critical to ensuring that services are integrated, responsive, considerate, and effective.

The 2005-2009 CFSP provides information on the following:

1. Child Welfare Services
2. Promoting Safe and Stable Families Programs
3. Child Abuse and Prevention and Treatment Act Services
4. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program and the Education and Training Vouchers Program

Specifically, the Agency provides the following information in the 2005-2009 CFSP:

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1. **Who We Are** - describes the authority to administer the services, the vision, mission and values of the Agency, guiding principles, quality improvement processes, decision making processes for family support services, and organizational charts. This section is intended to provide an overview for the reader and to assist with the structure and organization of the Agency.
2. **What We Do** - provides program reports and descriptions for the child welfare services continuum. The continuum includes: Child Protection Investigations, Family Services, Foster Care Services, Home Development, and Adoption Program Services. Also included is information on the John H. Chafee Independence Program and the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Programs. The Agency's interaction with and relation to the American Indian Tribes via the Indian Child Welfare Act. Special program initiatives which are ongoing from previous CFSP efforts are presented and described. They include: Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, Missing and Exploited Children, the Safe Haven Initiative, Louisiana Children's Trust Fund, Children's Justice Act Grant, Court Improvement Project, Citizen's Review Panels, and the Agency's Management Information System.
3. **Where We Are Going** - describes our program and training goals and objectives for the 2005 - 2009 CFSP.
4. **Budget Materials** – contains the CFS 101 and CAPTA budget.
5. **Assurances/Certifications and State Officials Signature**

The plan has a designated place for the Program Improvement Plan. At the time of submission of the CFSP, the Program Improvement Plan is under review by the Administration for Children and Families. Once approved and finalized, the Program Improvement Plan will be incorporated into this plan.

**2.1 Administration of Programs**

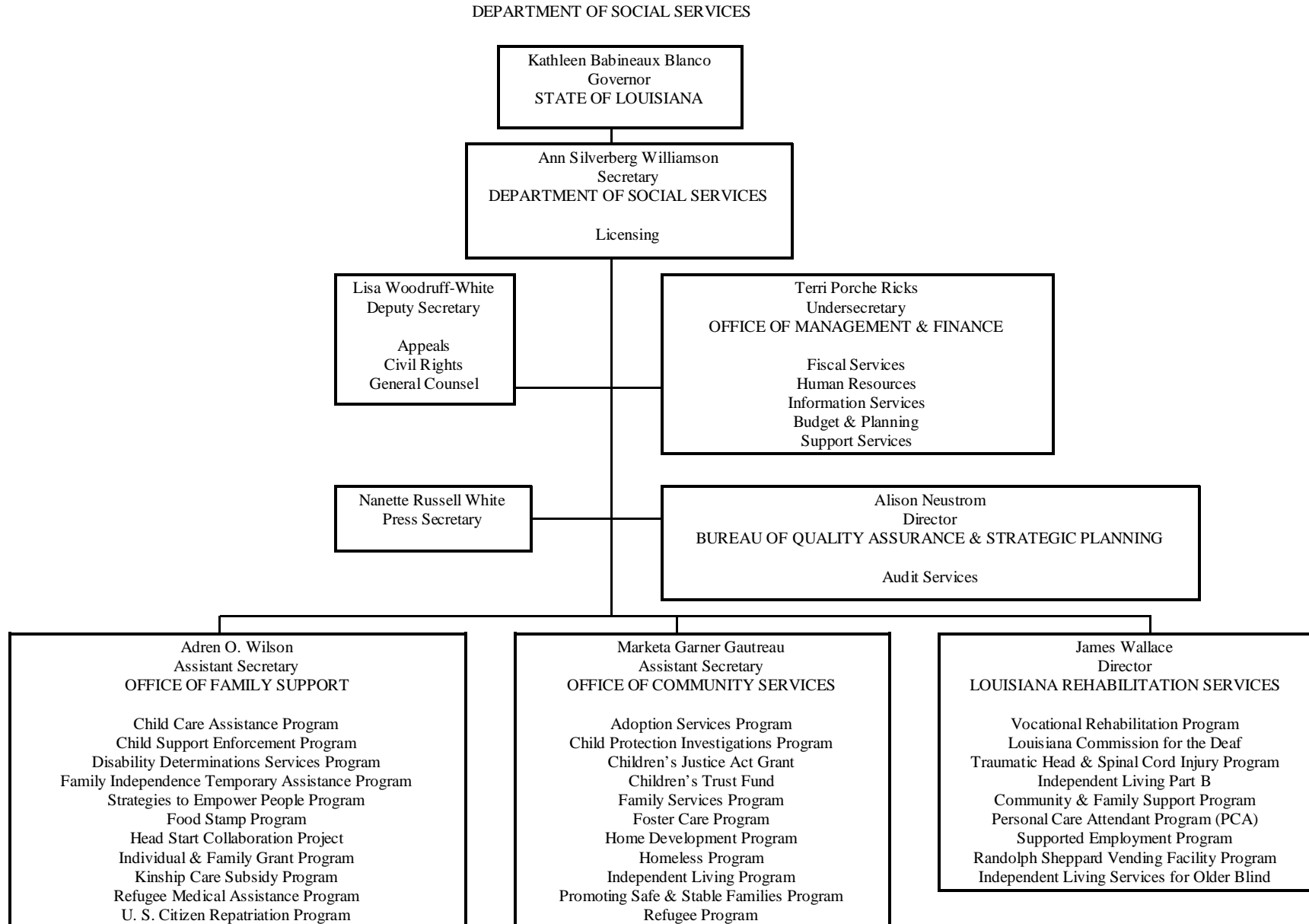
<b>Legal Reference</b>
42 USC622(b)(1)(B)
42 USC677(b)
45 CFR 1355
45 CFR 1357.15(a)
45 CFR 1357.15(e)(1)
42 USC5101 et seq.
45 CFR 1340.1

The Department of Social Services (DSS) is the single state agency designated in Louisiana to administer and supervise the administration of child welfare services delivered under Title IV-B subparts 1 and 2, and Title IV-E of the Social Security Act. In addition, the Department is designated to administer the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program and the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (P.L. 104-235). The mandate of DSS is toward the development and provision of social services, and improvement of social conditions for the citizens of Louisiana.

DSS administers the State’s child and family services programs through a single organizational unit, the Office of Community Services (OCS). OCS provides comprehensive social service and child welfare programs that include protective services, protective child care, family services, foster care and adoption. These services are administered statewide within a centralized organizational framework with 10 regional offices and 52 parish offices.

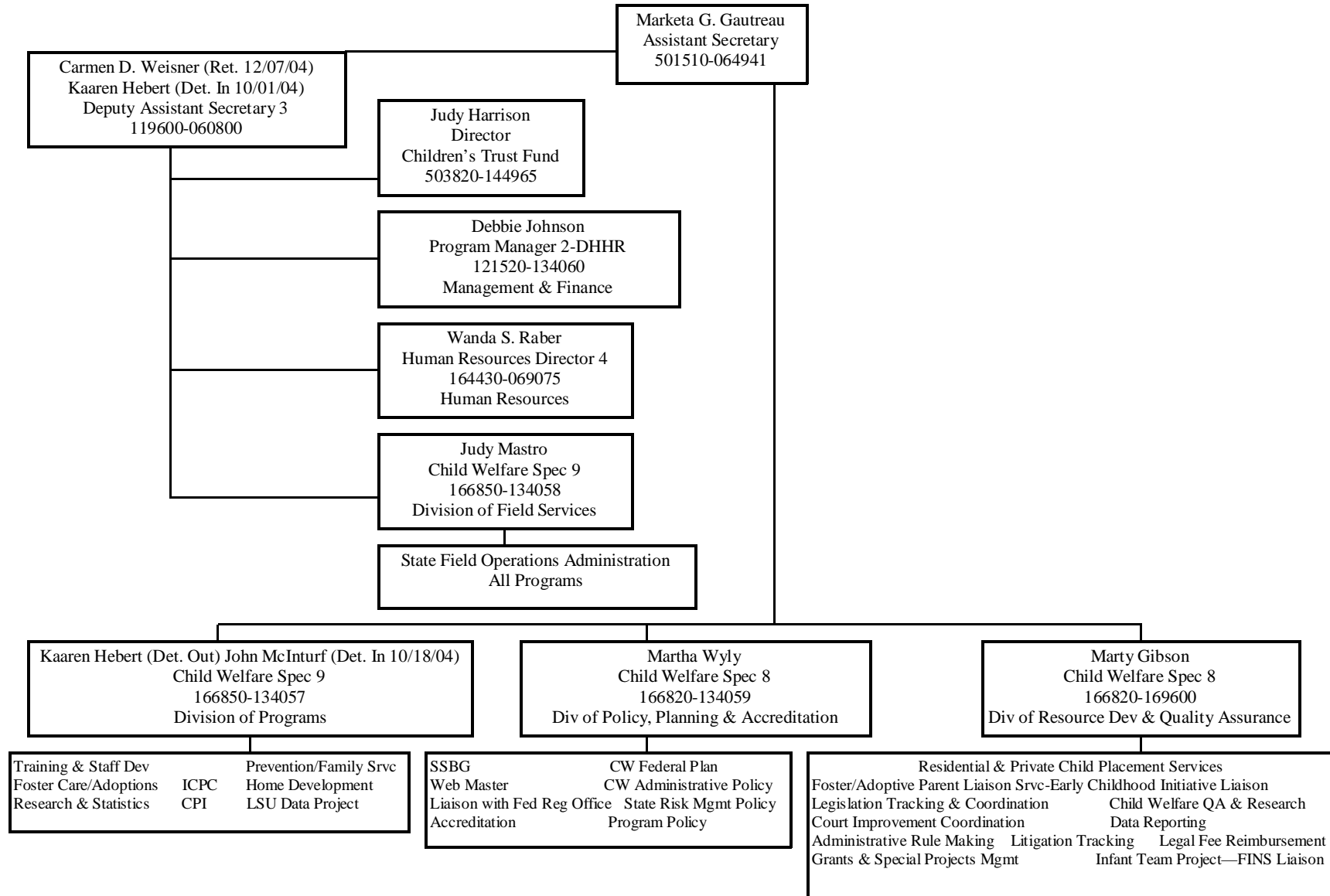


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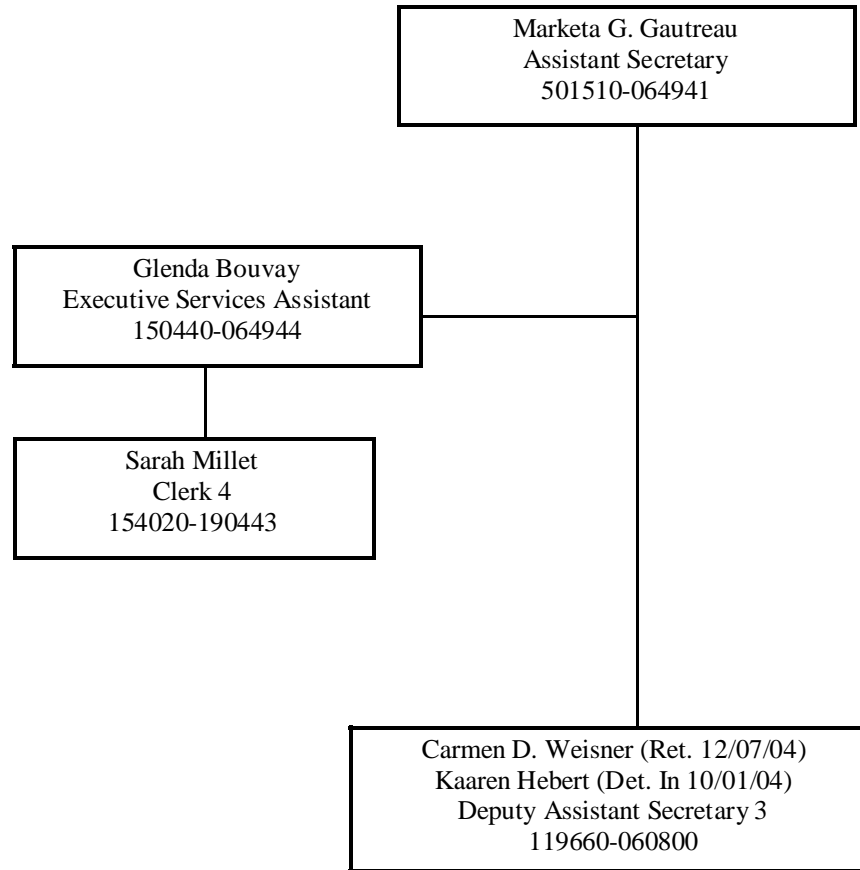
STATE OF LOUISIANA

OFFICE OF COMMUNITY SERVICES  
AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY



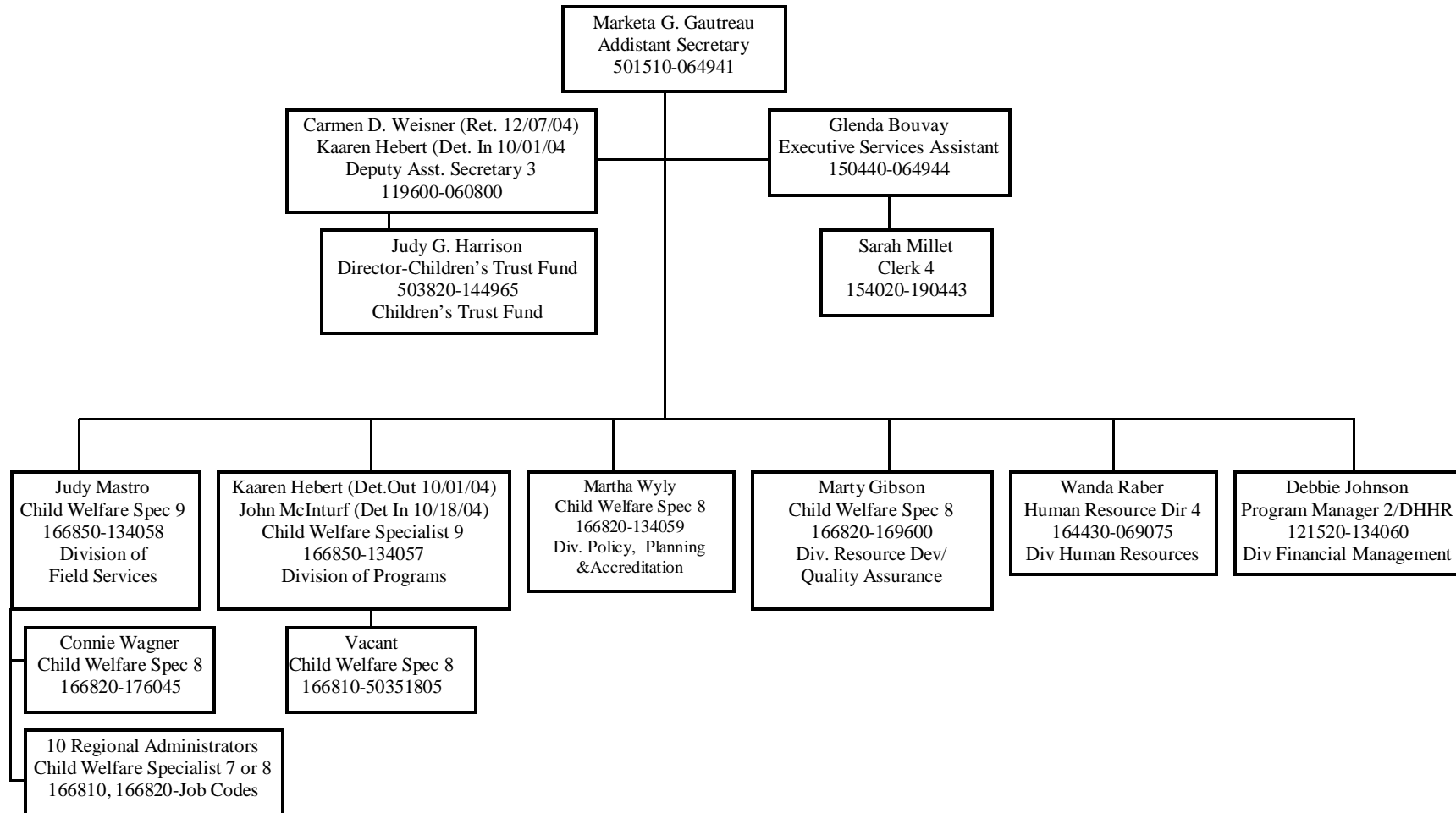
STATE OF LOUISIANA

ASSISTANT SECRETARY'S OFFICE



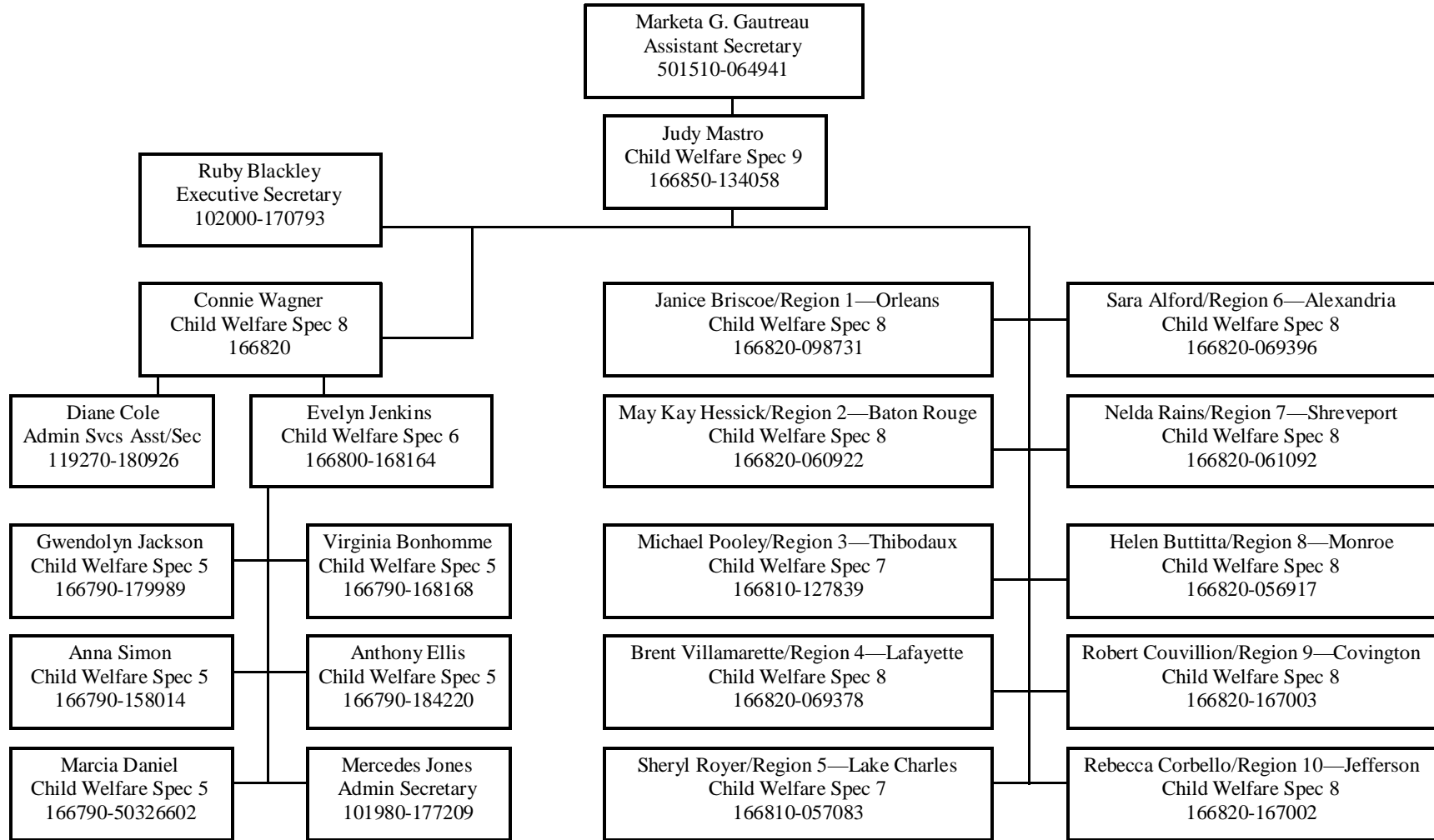
STATE OF LOUISIANA

OFFICE OF COMMUNITY SERVICES



STATE OF LOUISIANA

DIVISION OF FIELD SERVICES



**2.3 Vision Statement**

**Legal Reference**  
45 CFR1357.15(g)

The Office of Community Services (OCS) envisions a child and family system designed for protection, safety and healthy development of children that offers a well-integrated, broad range of services. OCS provides skilled and knowledgeable workers delivering these services in a culturally sensitive manner and provides an efficient, sophisticated, supportive, and committed supervisory and administrative staff. All supervisory and administrative staff support, enhance, and monitor line staff performances, identify and capture needed resources, make available the tools and programs which support service provision, and hold every level of the system accountable for fulfilling the Agency mission and mandate.

This vision is an expression of shared identity, shared values, and is based on a shared mission. It serves as a cornerstone for decision-making, a standard for measuring our work, and a guide for planning our future.

**2.4 Mission/Values**

**Legal Reference**

La. R.S. 36:477 C  
45 CFR 1357.15(e)(2)

The Office of Community Services shall provide for the public child welfare functions of the State, including but not limited to child protective services; making permanent plans for foster children and meeting their daily maintenance needs of food, shelter, clothing, necessary physical medical services, school supplies, and incidental personal needs; and adoption placement services for foster children freed for adoption.

**Core Values of the Office of Community Services**

Values determine the perception of the world around you either as an agency or an individual. For individuals, values affect the choices they make, the career they pursue, and even the words they use. In short, values determine how an individual lives his or her life. These same concepts apply to an agency. Values can affect the way clients are treated, the services which are offered, staff morale, or the climate of an agency.

Conflict often arises when interaction occurs between individuals or groups whose values clash. It is important to have a proper understanding of differing value systems approach and values in a cultural sensitivity manner. It is even more important for an agency to have proper understanding of its own value system. The essence of the Agency's values is defined through the following statement: OCS . . . "People committed to building a better future for those we serve."

In addition to identifying and defining the core values listed below, OCS evaluates its policies and practices to ensure that it is living its values.

**CORE VALUES**

- Respect:** We treat others with dignity and courtesy.
- Trust:** We interact with others in good faith.
- Reliability:** We honor our commitments.
- Honesty:** We are truthful, open and accountable in words and deeds.
- Commitment:** We are loyal and dedicated to our mission.
- Cooperative:** We develop and sustain partnerships and teamwork.
- Flexibility:** We are open to change and new ideas.
- Professionalism:** We approach our work with a body of knowledge, skills, values and ethics.

**Cultural Sensitivity**

OCS is committed to excellence in the development of a more culturally competent workplace. The Agency refers to culture as a set of values, beliefs, and practices of a particular group or subgroup. Culture not only shapes personal/group values and attitudes, it also influences individual/familial beliefs, practices and behavior. Furthermore, culture may be a factor in influencing service outcomes. Staff is expected to demonstrate cultural awareness of populations served in order to minimize or avoid stereotypes and biases which may result in disparate treatment for members of minority groups. Thus, OCS staff are expected to refrain from standardization of a particular culture's beliefs and practices. Each person is to be treated as an individual.

OCS believes that cultural competence is a process rather than an outcome. Staff is committed to awareness of the impact of culture and ethnicity of an individual's or family's values, beliefs and responses to agency involvement. The Agency is committed to developing a service delivery system which incorporates knowledge and skill with accurate assessment which recognizes culture-based beliefs regarding health, behavior, and child rearing practices. OCS and its' staff are committed to a service delivery system which offers service solutions that are respectful of cultural and ethnic factors and demonstrate an understanding of cultural and ethnic barriers.



**2.5 Guiding Principles****Legal Reference**

45 CFR 1357.15(g)  
 45 CFR 1355.25  
 45 CFR 1357.15(P)

The goals and objectives of the plan, embrace a continuum of principles and values, which guide child welfare practice and families coming to agency attention. These principles fall under three headings:

- Safety, permanency and well-being of children and families.
- Needs of children and families.
- Nature, scope, and adequacy of existing child and family and related social services.

**Safety, Permanency and Well-Being of Children and Families**

- A fundamental purpose of public child welfare practice is the protection of children at risk of harm.
- A basic principle of public child welfare practice today requires that every effort be made to help families become equipped in providing necessary care where safety and protection of their children in their own home is possible.
- The safety, permanency and well-being of children and of all family members are paramount. When safety can be assured, strengthening and preserving families is seen as the best way to promote the healthy development of children.
- Services are intensive enough and of sufficient duration to keep children safe and meet family needs. The actual level of intensity and length of time needed to ensure safety and assist the family may vary greatly between preventive (family support) and crisis intervention services (family preservation), based on the changing needs of children and families at various times in their lives. A family or an individual does not need to be in crisis in order to receive services.

**Needs of Children and Family**

- When families are unable, for whatever reason, to provide the basic care and safety needed for protection and development of their children, and the State must intervene, children should be assured of the necessary and proper care most appropriate for their individual needs.
- All children placed outside their home need to be assured of a timely and appropriate plan and the efforts necessary to secure a permanent, stable, family setting.

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## Child and Family Services Plan 2005 - 2009

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- The overriding purpose of public child welfare practice is the timely provision of family-focused, child-centered services designed to meet the needs of the family and child and, protect the rights and interests of both.
- Services promote the healthy development of children and youth, promote permanency for all children and help prepare youth emancipating from the foster care system for self-sufficiency and independent living.
- Services focus on prevention, protection, or other short or long-term interventions to meet the needs of the family and the best interests and needs of the individual(s) who may be placed in out-of-home care.
- Services are timely, flexible, coordinated, and accessible to families and individuals statewide. These services are principally delivered in the home or the community, and are delivered in a manner that is respectful of and builds on the strengths of the community and cultural groups.
- Services are organized as a continuum, designed to achieve measurable outcomes, and are linked to a wide variety of supports and services which can be crucial to meeting families' and children's needs, for example, housing, substance abuse treatment, mental health, domestic violence, health, education, job training, child care and informal support networks.

### **Nature, Scope, and Adequacy of Services For Children and Families**

- Child welfare practice is family-focused, child-centered services which require a conscious balancing of the family's "right to privacy" and "freedom from intrusion" with the child's right to protection from harm.
- Public child welfare programs require knowledgeable, skilled, committed personnel who embrace the CFSP guiding principles and are willing to assume the tremendous responsibilities of working with the multiple issues involved with the families needing state intervention. This level of staff commitment demands the ability to make the professional judgments that assure the best interest of children being served and protect the rights of the parents.
- Administrators of public child welfare systems recognize the importance of the mandates placed upon the system by lawmakers and taxpayers to be accountable and effective in the management of public resources.

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- Services are focused on the family as a whole; service providers work with families as partners in identifying and meeting individual and family needs; family strengths are identified, enhanced, respected, and mobilized to help families solve the problems which compromise their functioning and well-being.
- Most child and family services are community-based, involve community organizations, parents and residents in their design and delivery, and are accountable to the community and the client's needs.
- This philosophical perspective, which is based on the core values and agency mission statement, provides the conceptual foundation for how the Agency conducts itself in carrying out its mission and decision-making. These precepts are the standards against which the Agency judges the appropriateness of its actions and interactions.
- The overall agency philosophy and the principles are used as guideposts in developing, operating, and improving the continuum of child and family services.

**Forces Shaping Louisiana's Public Child Welfare System/Current Barriers to Meeting the Needs of Children**

**A. Obligation for the State to Provide Public Child Protection Intervention**

There is no federal legal obligation requiring a state to conduct child protection investigations. However, if a state accepts a federal CAPTA grant (about \$1 million annually in Louisiana), it must comply with its state child abuse reporting law and with the provisions of CAPTA. The U.S. Supreme Court, in its decision on the case Deshaney v. Winnebago County, US Citation 489 US 189 (1989), has ruled that there is no state duty in this respect. Otherwise, it is a matter of public policy and moral compunction as to the scope and degree that a state chooses to exercise its intervention authority. Louisiana accepts the need to provide this level of service in the continuum of services.

**B. Need in Defining the Desired Scope of State Child Protection Intervention**

There are generally three ranges of opinion influencing a state's program scope for child protection interventions:

- Child advocates generally support liberal intervention grounds and an expansion of the role of child protective services.
- Conservative citizens desire limited intervention, particularly in areas which are perceived to infringe on parental authority related to medical decisions, punishment alternatives, religious beliefs, and educational choices.
- More central and moderate groups of citizens are unfortunately less vocal in expressing what might represent a majority middle ground for consensus. This position recognizes the authority of the State to intervene in reported situations of serious, imminent, and clear harm or risk of harm to minor children, which is tempered by a fundamental recognition of parents' right to act on behalf of their children unless their behavior digresses below the above threshold.

There is a critical need for the executive and the legislative branch of government at the State and federal levels to enunciate a clear public policy statement defining the scope of intervention intended by the executive and legislative branches. Once this decision is made, a better determination of the resources needed versus those available is possible.

**C. Significance of the Scope of Child Protection Intervention**

The scope should reflect public consensus in order to command public support. This decision is critical in a fiscal respect: The scope of the child protection program, i.e., the intake parameters of the public child welfare system, ultimately defines the scope of the foster care system, e.g., foster care costs are increasing along with the foster care population while the federal financing overall is decreasing in relation to ultimate cost bearing.

**D. Historical Influence of the Foster Care Segment on the Public Child Welfare Program**

Historically, in the 1930's the foster care program evolved as a subsystem within the federally funded Aid to Dependent Child Program (ADC) as a means of substitute care for children who could not be cared for in their own homes. The ADC program was enacted to provide joint federal/state financial assistance to poor children in their natural family with no means of support. The foster care program, ADC-FC, received federal support for substitute family care for poor children who had no parent available for care or the parent's care was not safe for the child. A state may elect to provide substitute care for children other than poor families, i.e., who are not on public assistance; however, the State is responsible for funding the room, board, and supervision for these children and their health care, if they are not Medicaid eligible. In Louisiana, children from families on public assistance or who are eligible for it make up 76% of the caseload. Children eligible for Medicaid make up 95% of the caseload, as some are eligible in their own right based on a disability plus low family income. So, the State bears 24% of the remaining foster care population costs for room, board, and supervision and for the 5% remaining population health care costs. A state's discrete policy decisions about the scope of its child protection intervention program and the population served ultimately have significant financial impact.

**E. Significant Legal, Historical, and Societal Changes Have Transformed Public Foster Care**

In 1976, an advocacy movement nationwide began to express concerns about the numbers of children in foster care. In 1980, far reaching federal legislation was enacted replacing the old ADC-FC program with new prescriptive statutes governing federal financing of foster care, which delineated specific requirements for each case. The nationwide foster care population had reached the 500,000 mark.

In exchange for better financing (which never reached the statutorily designated level) states were to identify a permanent goal, i.e., permanent living arrangement, for each child by 18 months in care; develop a plan of services to accomplish that goal; develop methods of review including judicial for each case for progress; and provide reasonable efforts (with judicial determination of such) to avoid a child entering care (except in dangerous emergencies in which a child is not safe) and provide reasonable efforts to reunify a child with his biological family after he enters care. Reasonable efforts was to mean supportive services which were to be funded extensively with the funding source which never reached appropriations anywhere near the authorized level in the statute. In light of subsequent child fatalities across the nation, the notion of reasonable efforts was attacked as contributing to child deaths by having child protection try services in the home first. Although the federal law states danger to the child as an exception to requiring reasonable efforts, the view was that this philosophical bias has been wrongfully perceived and interpreted by judges and state agencies as requiring delay. The requirements significantly increased the workload of each caseworker while simultaneously the

State's overall foster care caseload had grown. For one short period in 1983 the national foster care caseload dipped, which gave hope that the philosophical underpinnings of the 1980 federal

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statutory prescription was working to reduce numbers of children in care and the average length of time spent in care.

This hope was soon extinguished by the upward spiral of children entering care. Not only the numbers of children entering care are bursting the seams of the public system, but the kinds of care children require and the reasons they enter care do not reflect the traditional purpose of the foster care system. Children entering care in the last decade have required much more than a safe place to live, i.e., traditional room and board and adult supervision. This is extremely critical to remember, as these elements of foster care are all that the child welfare federal funding supports at a partial match rate for only poor children. The greatest needs of today's foster care population are of a medical or behavioral health nature.

At the national level, there developed an emerging policy climate, which stressed individual responsibility and programmatic accountability. Congress spent months debating a series of bills and proposals targeting system reform in 1997. Only days prior to adjournment of the session, a bipartisan congressional effort secured a conference agreement and the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA) was passed overwhelmingly in the House and unanimously in the Senate. ASFA was signed into law and became effective upon signature of President Clinton on November 19, 1997.

The hallmark of ASFA was to strike a balance between family preservation and reunification with the health and safety of children, purposefully erring on the side of child safety. ASFA requires timely agency decision-making, clarifies the "reasonable efforts to reunify" requirement and promotes improved agency foster care and adoption practice. The overarching principle of ASFA is fundamentally to "reform the child welfare system to work better for the children it serves, to put their health and safety first in all efforts to achieve reunification or permanent placement."

In response to the various activities that are required with the passage of ASFA the Agency established a "SAFE ACT" Task Force in April 1998, whose initial function was to review the federal legislation and determine what changes should be recommended to the Children's Code Subcommittee of the Louisiana Law Institute.

The Task Force has served a number of functions and continues to serve as a forum for programmatic and legal implication discussions on court cases, pending policy, internal system restriction, future training needs of staff, and the CFSR process. Membership on the Task Force includes representatives from the Department's Bureau of General Counsel, OCS Program Development and QA staff, the Assistant Secretary of OCS, and DSS Information Management staff. External partners in this process include members of the Court Improvement Project staff and representatives of the Office of Youth Development. The Agency had also invited participation from the District Attorney's Association.

**F. Public Policy as Identifier of Needs and/or Structure**

Federal public policy has had several major impacts since the passage of ASFA.

1. A policy discussion and determination as to the appropriate scope of state child protection intervention and commensurate resources allocation occurred.
2. This plan period offered an opportunity to fine-tune our present system and explore with our community partners what needs to be accomplished to achieve the goals of ASFA.
3. A review of agency services and the development of a Program Improvement Plan resulted from the Child and Family Services Review Process.

## **2.6 Quality Improvement Processes**

### **2.6.A Accreditation**

After a three-year period of preparation, application, self-study and site visits, OCS became fully accredited by the Council on Accreditation for 2004 - 2007. COA standards help guide quality practices of the organization.

Key impacts of accreditation:

- Increasing professionalism of staff at all levels-line worker, supervisors, managers, parish, regional and state office staff.
- Establishing regional and state office Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) teams to address unmet needs, review agency decisions, establish corrective action plans when necessary. CQI is the “heartbeat of accreditation.”
- A system of quarterly, planned review of cases across the state.
- Expanding the role of community leadership in helping with the organization’s activities and mission in communities. This is done through a Consumer and Community Committee.
- Expanding the continuing efforts to pull staff into decision making at all levels, and to regularly sample or survey staff, consumers, foster parents, foster children, adoptive parents, and adoptive children on various topics concerning how services are delivered.
- Assisting with staff succession planning as senior staff retire and preparation of new oncoming staff for assuming roles of worker, supervisor, and manager.
- Providing staff across the State with an added outlet and a voice for expressing needs and concerns to management.
- Assisting and supporting organizational efforts to increase staff pay and increase staff qualifications for acquiring the terminal degree in child welfare, the Master of Social Work or Master’s Degree in a related field degree.
- Raising staff morale and esteem, creating a positive image of OCS workers in the communities we serve.
- Using the above processes as a means of long and short range planning processes for the organization.



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Each of these noted impacts provide the Agency with new vision, credibility and standards of practice and quality, both in management and in direct service delivery and practice.

At all levels of OCS, these factors will influence the coming five year period of the Child and Family Services Plan.

**2.6.B Quality Assurance/Continuous Quality Improvement**

The Department of Social Services/Office of Community Services (DSS/OCS) utilizes a traditional Quality Assurance model as well as a new Continuous Quality Improvement Process. Both processes help to improve service delivery by providing a means to analyze service outcomes and make improvements to service delivery in all program areas.

**Quality Assurance (QA) involves:**

- Improving the quality of services to children and families
- Monthly random case samples
- Ongoing case reviews by QA staff
- Responsiveness to the federal focus on compliance reviews
- The entire child welfare service continuum
- Data collections/measures of process/progress
- Exit conferencing with staff
- Reporting on the State's performance

Quality Assurance units are set up in regional offices to conduct case record reviews. In state office, staff compile data from the reviews, interprets findings and distributes the reports statewide.

**Key components of Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI):**

- A process of creating an environment in which management and workers strive to create constantly improving quality
- A theory-based management system that looks at processes/outcomes
- A long-term approach to quality improvement
- A client-centered philosophy
- An additional set of tools to help measure outcomes
- Accountability

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- Teamwork
- Good management
- Input from all levels of staff

CQI teams have been developed in each of the regions and at the state office level. Persons served, community stakeholders and all levels of agency staff are involved in the CQI process.

Quality is measured through a variety of processes, such as:

- Formal quality assurance case reviews in the programmatic areas of child protection investigations, family services, foster care and adoption;
- Consumer surveys/consumer satisfaction
- Stakeholder input and participation
- Feedback Mechanisms
- Program audits
- Contract monitoring
- Reports (performance indicators)
- Financial audits

Louisiana's quality processes consist of a number of procedures used by the Agency to monitor compliance with national, federal and state standards. The system includes:

- Ongoing licensing reviews by DSS Bureau of Licensing to ensure that minimum standards are met.
- Administrative and quality assurance reviews. (Monthly case samples ranging from approximately 7-10% of child protection investigation cases to 25-100% of foster care cases.)
- Quarterly Peer Case Reviews consisting of three tiers: QA reviews, record reviews, and interviews with staff and stakeholders. (Review of a random sample of 29-30 cases per region per year.)

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- Residential Provider Reviews ensure adherence to State Child Residential Case Minimum Standards. Reviews focus on systemic issues, procedural compliance and service outcomes.
- Stakeholder participation achieved via committee participation at the regional/state level.
- Council on Accreditation (COA) on-site reviews to ensure compliance with national standards.

The Agency's quality processes are successful in identifying strengths and needs in the organization and its service delivery system. These processes also help to identify trends in service delivery in order to facilitate changes in policy and practice.

**2.6.C Stakeholder Participation**

The Agency will continue to increase efforts to include stakeholders in agency planning. Ongoing efforts include:

- Obtaining participation of stakeholders from state agencies and non-profit agencies to address issues such as cultural sensitivity, development of a public education plan and problems interfacing with the Agency.
- Quarterly consumer and community stakeholder meetings.
- Development and support of Citizen Review Panels.
- Administration of customer satisfaction surveys to Agency staff, stakeholders and consumers.
- Provide feedback to staff, stakeholders and consumers on agency efforts to improve service delivery.
- Participation of stakeholders in development of the Annual Progress and Services Report and the five year Child and Family Services Plan.
- Continued develop and expansion of working relationships with the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs and with local American Indian Tribes.
- The Agency is a participant and an active partner on many interagency and community panels.

Efforts in development of the 2005-2009 CFSP included:

- Public hearing
- Notice of public hearing published in Potpourri Section of Louisiana Register and in major newspapers statewide
- Notification of public hearing to American Indian tribes in Louisiana
- Dissemination of draft copies of 2005-2009 CFSP (to tribes and other community stakeholders).

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The public hearing was held on June 3, 2004, and two stakeholders attended. One was the Executive Director of Volunteers of America (VOA) in Baton Rouge (also administers VOA programs in Southwest Louisiana) and the other represented the Louisiana Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) organization. OCS staff presented the process in developing the 2005-2009 CFSP and discussed the goals within the plan. The goals reflect efforts of the Agency to improve services related to federal outcome goals. It was also explained that the Agency has recently sent to the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) a proposed Program Improvement Plan (PIP) that was developed based on the findings from the federal Child and Family Services Review held in Louisiana during September 2003.

One stakeholder discussed adoption outcomes. She noted that use of contracts made by OCS with other agencies concerning adoptive families are handled differently from one region to the next (eg. one region of the State used contract services for placing children while another region did not use similar contract services). Another stakeholder noted that the measurement of goals was not expressed statistically, but was more oriented toward output. It seemed to this person, the goals sought processes to improve, which in turn would affect the statistics or outcomes.

Also, discussed was the difference between the Council on Accreditation's (COA) orientation and the federal approach. OCS staff explained that COA focused on process while the CFSP focused on outcomes. This results in more attention on OCS activities such as human services and program development in the COA review than in the CFSP process. Finally, the CASA representative said that her organization wants to work closely with OCS in order to develop and improve consistent contact between children in OCS custody and community helpers.

**2.6.D Peer Case Review**

As part of efforts to achieve national accreditation and improve service delivery the Agency created a statewide peer review system in Federal year 2002 - 2003. In addition, this effort assisted in preparing staff at state, regional and parish levels for the Child and Family Services Review.

This comprehensive review process is considered an important component of the quality improvement process because it offers the organization a system of case reviews wherein comprehensive data is synthesized to identify trends in service delivery. It focuses on outcomes of safety, permanency, and well being for families and children in all programs, and in the general community. It includes a change mechanism to address findings on case practices and provides for top-level management involvement in addressing systemic issues and needs.

**Agency Model of Peer Case Review (PCR)**

- A three tiered review process consisting of: QA compliance reviews, case record reviews and stakeholders interviews/focus groups.
- Comprehensive use of data sources: traditional Quality Assurance (QA) information, child welfare practice expertise, Council on Accreditation (COA) standards, Federal outcome standards
- A random case sampling method (approved by COA) allowing for selection of cases across all programs
- Review of each case for extraneous factors and information
- Cross regional review that systematically allows for one region to review a second region's cases
- On-site support with state level CQI committee oversight and feedback
- Multi-modal review of cases: case review, worker and stakeholder interviews, analysis and use QA program data for each region, and focus groups with significant members of each community;
- Ability to refer findings to state and/or regional level CQI team for system-wide attention or correction.
- Peer-to-peer review process with first line workers reviewing other first line worker's effort to achieve safety, permanency, and well-being. The review allows for structured dialog on case outcomes, case dynamics, and service delivery.

## **2.7 Decision Making Process for Family Support Services**

The Agency has used two basic decision making approaches in securing family support services from local agencies and organizations:

OCS will continue the Request for Proposals (RFP) process in the creation of the Family Resource Centers. The Agency identified that there existed a need for expanded family preservation and support services across Louisiana. All regions of the State were included in the RFP process.

Critical components of the RFP process included:

- Needed services were described in the RFP and agencies were required to explain how they would provide the needed services.
- Services will continue to be community oriented with services provided in the family home if possible.
- Services solicited in the RFP will continue to be multi-faceted and tailored for particular area and clients. The goal is to have a variety of services that were otherwise unavailable in their community.
- The Agency continues its selection and evaluation of the services provided by the Family Resource Centers as well as its efforts to refine and expand the services. The centers are monitored and evaluated through Louisiana State University and agency staff. (Results of contracts for establishing Child Welfare Family Resource Centers are described in the Promoting Safe and Stable Families section.)

The Agency will provide family support services by selecting agencies and organizations through a state approved contracting process. This process seeks to find needed services based on the availability of agencies with these services in a given geographical area. A variety of programs have historically been funded in this manner including the Infant Team Assessment Model in Jefferson Parish and Intensive Home Based Services in the New Orleans Region. These programs are monitored and evaluated on an on-going basis by both local and state office staff.

A major consideration in the decision making process for family support services is to explore how the agencies will be community-based. OCS will continue to seek out organizations that provide the following community-based service according to the following requirements:

- Services will be sought in a particular area to meet the needs of our clients and satellite offices may be established in areas accessible to clients (ex. rural areas where location and transportation can present barriers to service access).



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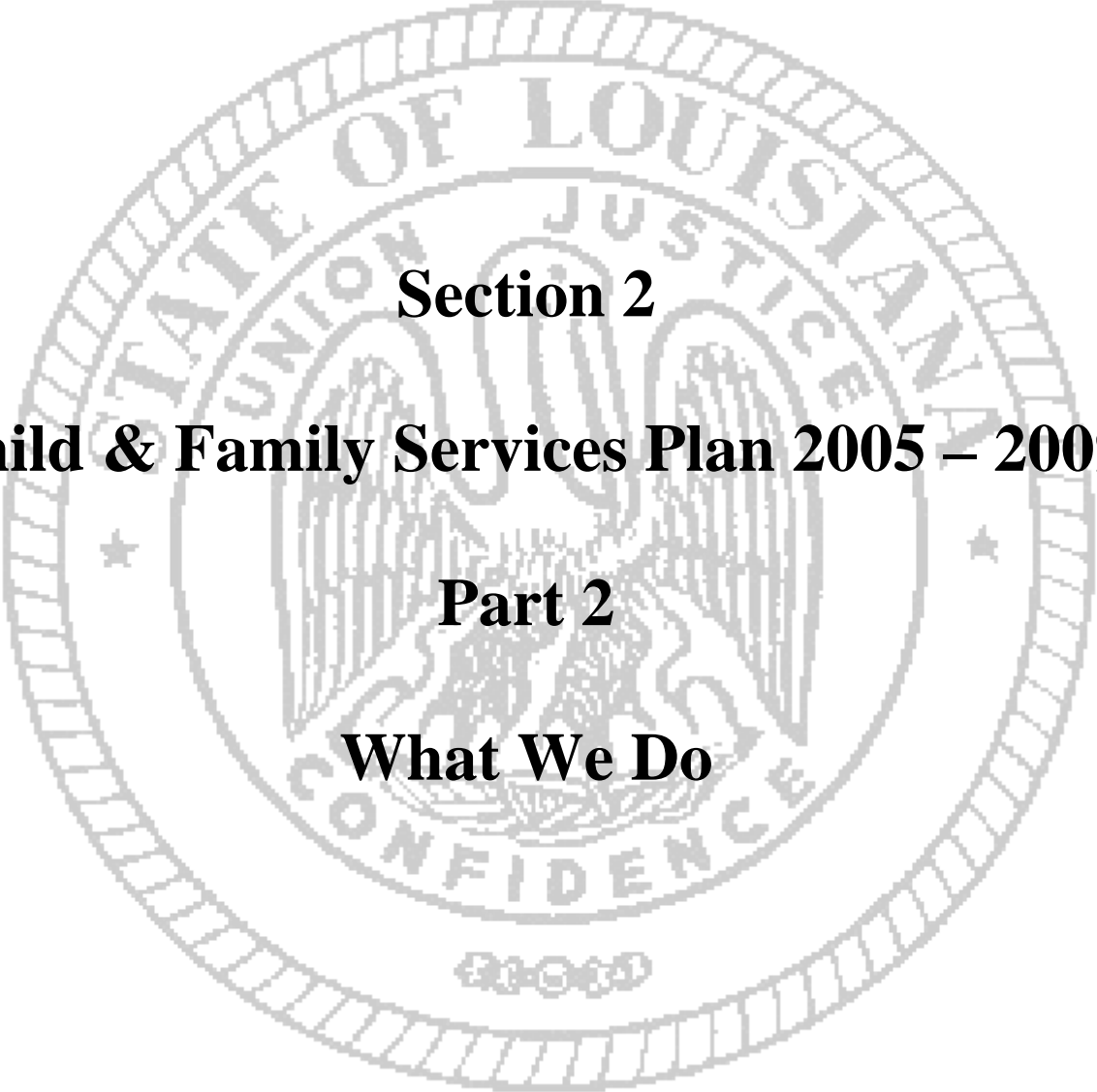
Most services provided by Child Welfare Family Resource Centers are provided in the home.

- Services will be provided in local community centers, including day camps and after school tutoring programs.
- Services will be provided in a culturally sensitive manner by employing persons from the community and also through an awareness of the ethnic and cultural backgrounds of the families served.

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The seal of the State of Louisiana is a large, circular emblem in the background. It features an eagle with wings spread, perched on a shield. The shield is supported by two hands, one from above and one from below. The words "STATE OF LOUISIANA" are written in an arc at the top, "UNION JUSTITIA" in an arc below it, and "CONFIDENCE" in an arc at the bottom. There are two stars on either side of the eagle. At the very bottom of the seal, the date "1804" is visible.

**Section 2**  
**Child & Family Services Plan 2005 – 2009**  
**Part 2**  
**What We Do**

## 2.8 Child Welfare Continuum

### 2.8.A Child Protection Investigations

**Legal Reference**

42 USC622(b)(5)  
42 CFR 1357.15(a)(1)(i)

The Office of Community Services (OCS) provides a statewide network of children's protective services. The services normally begin with the Child Protection Investigation (CPI) Program. These services are specialized and provide social investigative assistance for children who are alleged to be neglected, abused, exploited, or dependent. The investigative service process starts with the intake report of abuse or neglect of a child living with his family or in a foster home, restrictive care facility, day care center, or uncertified foster family setting.

Reports are received by local parish offices through a 24-hour hotline service and/or a recorded information service after normal work hours. These reports are then investigated by local parish OCS offices.

Investigations are prioritized based on the degree of potential harm posed to the child as described in the report. Available staff resources are allocated to the investigation of the highest priority cases first. The investigative model adopted by the Agency, and formalized into agency policy, prescribes the minimum requirements for the type and method of report, subject, and collateral contacts that must be completed for each investigation. The model emphasizes the importance of assessing the current safety and longer-term risk of harm resulting from abuse and neglect to the child.

The CPI worker may provide limited social services during the investigation based on the level of risk and needs of the family. These services consist of:

- Safety assessment and planning
- Risk assessment
- Coordination of emergency medical care and related services
- Emergency removal and placement
- Referral to the OCS Family Services Program or other appropriate agency
- Short-term counseling
- Obtaining basic concrete services for clients through the Preventive Assistance Fund (PAF) and Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
- Interviews and coordination with law enforcement, collateral contacts, and resource networks.

Once the investigation is completed and a finding determined, the child protection investigative process is complete. When the allegations of a case have been determined to be unfounded, the case is closed as invalid. When needed, referrals to community resources are offered to the family. For cases in which the finding is inconclusive, services through the OCS Family Services program and/or referrals to community resources are offered as indicated by the assessments of safety and risk. In cases where the finding for the investigation is valid, and the children remain in the home, families may be referred to the OCS Family Services program, or may be referred to community services as indicated by the assessments of risk and safety. If the risk is assessed as low after CPI provides services, the case may be closed valid, services completed.

If a child is removed from his parent's custody and placed in the state's custody under OCS supervision, the child will receive foster care services. To prevent unnecessary removals of children, a case conferencing among the involved protective services, family services, and foster care staff is required before removal to determine if preventive services are more appropriate. When a child is removed on an emergency basis, a case conference is held post-removal.

**On-Going Services:**

- Refine the Quality Assurance (QA) system for the CPI program that evaluates staff compliance with established policy and procedure. QA also identifies areas that need improvement, and helps evaluate outcome indicators for this program.
- Implement the Agency's Assessment Model in the Jefferson Region, with agency staff, and in Orleans Region, with a private contractor. This program diverts reports of low risk child maltreatment to workers who focus their intervention on the assessment of needs for service delivery. The Agency has completed a second review of the project and presented the results to the management team.
- Support and participate on the state legislatively mandated Child Death Review Panel which is a multi-disciplinary group charged with the responsibility to review, within the State, the handling of unexpected child deaths occurring in children under the age of 15.
- Conduct internal agency fatality reviews on OCS cases active at the time of the child's death or in which there has been agency involvement with the family within 12 months of the fatality.
- Support Family, Advocacy, Care and Education Services (FACES), a project with the Children's Hospital in New Orleans, to provide services targeting Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) or substance exposed infants and their families.
- Statewide training on sexual abuse investigations for case managers.

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- Sponsoring and planning the annual multidisciplinary conference, “Together We Can.”
- Maintain national accreditation for the Child Protection Investigation Program through the Council on Accreditation (COA).
- Coordinate agency efforts with that of private organizations in order to support prevention services (CAPTA Funding).
- Provide specialized training to staff conducting out-of-home investigations, including investigations of foster homes and residential facilities (CAPTA Funding).
- Coordinate services and build linkages to providers of services for OCS clients who are victims of domestic violence.
- Collaboration with the Office of Family Support and Office of Addictive Disorders sponsored by Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana. The purpose of these meetings is to improve collaborative efforts among agencies.
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of the Project Safe Program. This program is being piloted in Jefferson Region through the Jefferson Parish Human Services Authority and serves as a comprehensive outreach and treatment program for substance abusing mothers also involved in the child welfare system.
- Address domestic violence issues by using ten technical assistance days. The Children and Domestic Violence Project through the National Child Welfare Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues will provide consultation. As a result of the consultation, it is expected the Agency will develop policy to integrate domestic violence assessments into the investigation process.
- Use of the newly revised safety assessment instrument. In addition, training of new staff regarding the revised instrument by the training unit.
- Efforts with a community and governmental agency task force dedicated to promoting local and statewide awareness of Louisiana’s Safe Haven Relinquishment Act.
- Contracting with the Institute for Family Development to provide training entitled “Critical Thinking Framework” which will aid staff in improving decision-making skills.

**2.8.B Family Services****Legal Reference**

42 USC622(b)(5)

45 CFR 1357.15 a(1)(i)

Family Services (FS) are social services, provided to families and children to address problems of abuse/neglect and promote the safety of the children living with their family, relatives or another persons, while remaining in the custody of their parent(s). Such services are appropriate in situations where the abuse/neglect is not assessed to be of the nature and extent that would place one or more of the children in immediate danger of serious harm.

In FS cases where the children have not been taken into custody of the Departmental of Social Services (DSS), the parents/caretakers usually have not been court ordered to work with the Agency. In some situations, however, the family is participating in services according to the terms of a court order, although the children remain in the custody of the parents/caretakers.

This program is based upon the philosophy that each child should remain in his own home if it can offer him safety and meet his basic needs. Congress endorsed this view in the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980 (Public Law 96-272), which mandates states receiving federal funding for their Child Welfare Programs to provide services to families to prevent the foster care placement of children.

Throughout the service continuum, services focus on the basic principles, of safety, permanency and well-being. The following briefly describes the available services:

- Assessment and case planning - The social assessment is the process by which a worker gathers information concerning the child, family members, family dynamics, circumstances of their lives, interaction with the community, and resources available to them for problem solving. The Family Service Worker is to engage the family in an ongoing process wherein the family and worker will identify areas of concern related to the safety and risk of the children along with the family strengths in a manner that will result in mutually agreed upon service goals.
- Indirect service provision - The worker serves as a “coordinator” of services by referring the client to and/or arranging for the various types of intervention that might be indicated based upon the social assessment. Many of the services to which we refer clients are made available through our Child Welfare Family Resource Centers located in each region.
- Direct service provision - The worker may provide direct services to the family including the teaching of problem solving skills, parent education, individual, group or family therapy. These services are based on the needs of the family, the worker’s skill level, and time available to devote to direct service provision.

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- Intensive in-home services - OCS has a limited number of contracts to provide intensive, in-home services to families in order to prevent removal of the children from the home. Community agencies provide intensive in-home services.
- Protective Day Care - Limited services are available when it is determined that child care is needed in order to reduce the risk of harm to a child(ren) while enabling the child to remain in his own home.
- Homemaker Services - Available in some areas of the State on a limited basis, in order to supplement components of the parents' role and build or reinforce appropriate parenting skills.
- Therapeutic or Supportive Services - Contracted with private providers, these services are available to Family Service clients up to 24 sessions. Exceptions for continued services are approved in state office on a case-by-case basis. Some services delivered through these contracts are provided in homes of families.
- Preventive Assistance Funds - A limited amount of money is available to OCS workers to purchase items or services (or both) to prevent the removal of children from their families and placement in foster care. The intent of these funds is to help families in crisis to stabilize, thus avoiding out of home placements for children through emergency service provision and implementation of the FS case plan.

## **II. On-Going Services**

- Provide mental health services to children and families in OCS programs.
- Provide Intensive Home-Based Services (IHBS) in those situations in which the Agency would otherwise request immediate removal of at least one of the children.
- Use the Preventive Assistance Fund (PAF), a service fund available for families active in CPI and FS. The service provides non-recurring financial assistance to families who are at risk of out-of-home placement due to temporary, urgent, financial circumstances.
- Use the Preventive Assistance Fund/LIHEAP (Low Income Energy Assistance Program) that provides funding for addressing the heating and cooling costs of eligible families. The purpose of the LIHEAP program is to provide immediate energy crisis services to families and individuals who are experiencing economic and social hardships.
- Provide home-based family therapy contract services. Treatment is goal-directed and specific time frames are established. The focus of home-based work is assessment, planning and service delivery.

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- Provide in-office therapy contract services. These services include assessments and therapy, usually in individual, couple, family, or group therapy. Also contracts for parenting and parent aide services are available.
- Provide statewide training in safety assessment and planning. Safety assessment and planning examines the threat of likely, immediate harm to a child based on the factors known about the child, the caretaker, and the environment. Staff are trained to consider the factors of the child, caretaker, severity/chronicity of abuse and neglect, the environment and the family factors.
- Expand use of Family Group Decision Making (FGDM). This is a promising child welfare practice, which invites family, extended family, friends and community to act as primary decision makers for children in the child welfare system.
- Utilize the Child Welfare Family Resource Centers for services to families after a referral by the Family Service Worker. The center's services include: counseling, mentoring, parenting classes and respite. These services are often offered in home.
- Project LA-SAFE, which provides outreach and gender specific substance abuse treatment for the mothers of children involved in the child welfare system.
- Maintain national accreditation for the Family Services program through the Council on Accreditation (COA).



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**2.8.C Foster Care****Legal References**

42 U.S.C. 622 (b)(5)

45 CFR 1357.(a)(1)(i)

The foster care program provides substitute, temporary care for a planned period of time when a child must be separated from his parents or family and when the Agency has been awarded legal custody of the child through an appropriate court of jurisdiction.

The state provides a number of services in order to accomplish the goals of the foster care program. Agency staff work directly with the foster children, their parents and/or families, and the foster parents on an individual basis and in mandated family team conferences to formulate time-limited, goal oriented contracts and case plans.

Additional resources (such as mental health, legal, restrictive treatment services, and medical evaluation, consultation, or treatment) are obtained as needed in order to provide appropriate services to the child and family.

A major component of the foster care program is working with the child's biological family. The biological family is considered as a primary resource for the child. Foster care is intended to provide a temporary solution; therefore, the development of a permanent plan for the child must consider the restoration of the biological family. The family is informed of the legal issues for reunification. The family is encouraged to solicit ideas on ameliorating problems, which necessitated their child's placement in foster care. These solutions are placed in the case plan and the family is encouraged to work towards achievement of the goals. For those situations in which there are indicators of a poor prognosis for family reunification and no viable family permanency resources, a dually certified foster home is selected. These families make a dual commitment to the foster child, to support reunification and to adopt if reunification is not possible.

Foster parent applicants are required to complete pre-service training before being certified to care for foster children. Monthly board payments are made to certified foster care or restrictive treatment facilities. Expenses incurred on behalf of the foster children by authorized persons are reimbursed within policy and fiscal limitations.

The three basic types of homes in which children may be placed are:

- Diagnostic and assessment (D&A) emergency placement homes – temporary (30-60 days) placements used for the purpose of assessing a child so that better placement matches can be made.
- Regular foster homes – placements that provide continuing 24-hour substitute parenting. These homes may include child specific homes that are related or known to the child or adoption resource homes that are dually certified as foster and adoptive parents. This certification of regular foster parents may be obtained through the Agency or through private foster care (PFC) contracts.

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- Specialized foster family care – These homes include:
  - Therapeutic foster family care (TFC) – homes made available through contracts with private agencies and designed to provide specific services for children whose special needs cannot be met in a traditional foster home. These homes were developed to provide an alternative to institutionalization and to allow community placement of those individuals who can receive treatment services in family settings.
  - Specialized foster family care – homes given payment in addition to the board rate to provide care for a certain age range or type of child (e.g. adolescents, developmentally delayed, etc.) Children appropriate for these homes are those who meet the criteria for specialized homes but present less difficulty of care than those who are placed in TFC homes.
  - Bridge homes – homes designed to provide temporary placement to children while they move from foster care to adoption. These homes assist children in making the transition between programs.

Another placement option for children is a residential treatment facility. These placements are available for children whose needs cannot be met in a family home setting. The goal of these facilities is to provide treatment to children while in a residential setting with the ultimate outcome being movement of the child to a less restrictive placement.

### On-Going Services

- Coordinate the use of TFC/PFC foster homes to serve the children with unique needs such as medically fragile or behavior disorders.
- Utilize the Reunification Assistance Fund (RAF) to provide immediate funds for concrete services to achieve permanency for children in state custody.
- Strengthen the process of matching children with families so that permanency can be achieved.
- Pilot of the Level of Care System to establish a payment system based on the individual needs of the child and the special skills or training of the substitute parent.
- Develop new policy or revise existing policy in the areas related to American Indian child welfare and the Indian Child Welfare Act as needed.
- Maintain and improve a Quality Assurance system for the foster care program to improve the outcome of service provision for children in care.

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- Monitor state and federal health care reform legislation for impact on children in the foster care and adoption programs.
- Identify factors that contribute to placement disruptions and develop strategies for addressing them to reduce the likelihood of multiple placements for children in foster care.
- Improve the quality and distribution/availability of restrictive placement resources while maximizing cost efficiency of those services through the Division of Resource Development and Quality Assurance.
- Explore and develop resources to provide respite as a support to help retain foster parents and preserve placements.
- Transition the monitoring of mental health services from Clinical Evaluation Program (CEP) to OCS.
- Reinforce the concepts of Concurrent Planning, thereby maintaining a structured and focused approach to working towards reunification while at the same time establishing an alternative or backup permanent plan.
- Improve quality of Adoption and Foster Care Analysis Reporting System (AFCARS) reporting.
- Monitor MEPA/IEPA federal legislation through training, policy issuance, and case reviews.
- Implement new policy regarding the final rules issued under 45 CFR 4088-4092, the federal regulation that amends Title IV-E foster care eligibility.
- Liaison with the Louisiana Foster and Adoptive Parent Association Board and monitor the contract that helps to fund the Annual Foster Parent Conference.
- Compile licensing deficiencies from all regions into a report and submit to executive management.
- Maintain national accreditation of the Foster Care program through the Council on Accreditation (COA).

### **Collaboration:**

- Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH) for mental health and developmental services by using Mental Retardation/Developmental Disabilities MR/DD waiver services through Medicaid;

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- Office of Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD) for developing an interagency agreement that provides more timely service provision;
- Early Steps, formerly Childnet, and DHH for utilization of Early Periodic Screening Diagnostic Treatment (EPSDT) services and access inpatient psychiatric and residential hospital beds for severely impaired children;
- Office of Family Support (OFS) for implementation of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Kinship Care subsidy programs;
- Office of Mental Health, Children's Cabinet, Tulane Medical School, LSU Medical School and other public and private organizations serving ages 0-6 to build infrastructure to support specialized assessment and interventions;
- Jefferson Parish to improve services for substance abuse treatment for joint OCS/ Office of Addictive Disorders (OAD) clients.

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**2.8.D Home Development****Legal References**

42 U.S.C. 622 (b)(9)  
45 CFR 1356.20;  
Sec 554, P.L. 103-  
382 of 1994

The Home Development Program is responsible for recruitment, certification and retention of foster and adoptive homes. The Agency has a statewide network of home development units with one unit in each of the 10 regions. These units are charged with developing comprehensive recruitment efforts to attract families who meet the licensing standards of the Department of Social Services Bureau of Licensing and the Agency's minimum standards. In addition to the Home Development program, OCS contracts with private agencies to supplement efforts in recruitment and certifying homes for children.

Services augmenting the home development process consists of intake, pre-service training, certification, in-service training, retention, and foster home re-evaluation.

**Statewide Recruitment/Retention Strategy**

Each region formulates and implements an annual, written recruitment/retention plan based on the uniqueness and diversity of its population and the needs of children within the respective region. The plans must include:

- Analysis of parish specific needs that identifies the demographics and placement requirements of the children;
- Steps that will be taken to focus resources for the target population that may produce potential foster or adoptive families for a particular child;
- Methodology and time frames for implementation of the plan;
- Cost associated with recruitment activities.

Note - the Agency will be participating in the AdoptUSKids nationwide recruitment activities that are scheduled to begin May 2004.

- Compliance with of the Multiethnic Placement Act (MEPA) of 1994, and the Interethnic Adoption Provisions of 1996:
  - A description of the characteristics of waiting children;
  - Specific strategies to reach all parts of the community;
  - Diverse methods of disseminating general and child specific information;

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- Strategies for assuring that all prospective foster parents have access to the home study process;
- Strategies for dealing with linguistic barriers;
- Procedures for a timely search for prospective parents for waiting children, including the use of exchanges and other interagency efforts.

- Retention Surveys

Conducted by each region to determine the reasons foster or adoptive parents leave the program. State office staff reviews the reasons and the survey results are compiled and disseminated to the appropriate regional office.

- Methods of Disseminating General and Child Specific Information

- Media recruitment such as newspaper articles and weekly television coverage;
- Enlisting community persons to serve as advisory board members, recruiters, and liaisons between the agency and the community served;
- Target public service announcements;
- Video orientation depicting characteristics of children needing placement;
- Special recruitment committees;
- Gospel jubilees hosted by churches in the African American community;
- Mini-exchange meetings where regional staff seek to match children with prospective families;
- Local foster parent associations formed to support foster parents and potential adoptive parents;
- Media coverage highlighting success stories of adoption;
- Billboards recruiting foster/adoptive parents;
- Using resources of private adoption agencies with which OCS partners to produce television spots and publications to reach a wider and more specific audience;
- New media spot developed with Governor Blanco for recruitment.

- Accessibility to the Home Certification Process
  - Intake services – available in each regional office from 8:00 – 4:00, Monday through Friday;
  - Orientation – offered every 21 days to inform inquiring families and individuals about the foster/adoptive process. Video orientation is also available;
  - Pre service training – MAPP/GPS sessions are conducted in each region to certify families or individuals who meet the requirements to be foster or adoptive parents;
  - Home studies, pre-service and in-service training and other support services provided by the Agency are provided at no cost to all agency foster and adoptive parents.

- Adoption Exchanges

Meetings are convened statewide to assure that recruitment efforts are occurring and to determine what additional measures may be necessary to locate an appropriate family for a child.

- Criminal Record Clearances

Criminal record clearances including fingerprinting are done on all prospective foster/adoptive home applicants (and members of their household 18 years of age or older). Both state and nationwide clearances are also conducted on existing certified homes where there is reason to believe a family member has been involved in adult criminal behavior since the initial certification. Fingerprinting equipment has been installed in each region.

### On-Going Services

- Institute uniform policy manual and new policy dictates for the Home Development program.
- Revise needs assessment and screening tools to recruit and retain foster/adoptive families.
- Education of agency staff, foster parents, contracted family care providers, and the community about the nature of MEPA/IEPA. Monitor implementation of this regulation.
- Statewide recruitment efforts for children with special needs or otherwise difficult to place.

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- AdoptUSKids on the Internet.
- Implementation of policy concerning National Clearances through the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI).
- Expansion of the use of technology to broaden the pool of foster/adoptive parents including the use of videos of children, in-focus projectors, laptop computers and digital cameras.
- Strengthen the statewide recruitment/retention plan for foster/adoptive parents.
- Utilizing foster parents as co-trainers during the pre-service MAPP/GPS training.
- Compile licensing deficiencies from all regions into a report and submit to executive management.
- Utilization and implementation of strategies from the National Resource Center for Foster Care and Permanency Planning.
- Provide specialized in-service training for foster parents.
- Utilize Internet website for in-service training.
- Maintain national accreditation for the Home Development program through the Council on Accreditation (COA).



**2.8.E Adoption**

Legal Reference 42 USC622(b)(5) 45 CFR 1357.15 a(1)(i)
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When children in foster care are unable to return to their biological family, adoption is usually the permanent plan. Each child who needs adoption services is afforded every opportunity to be placed timely in a permanent home that meets his individual medical, physical, educational, and psychological needs.

The adoption program includes a broad spectrum of services focused on eliminating barriers to permanency for children waiting for adoption. These services consist of:

- Statewide outreach, recruitment, training and certification activities to obtain adoptive families.
- Recruitment contracts/Purchase of Service agreements with licensed in-state and out-of-state adoption agencies.
- Listing of available children and families with the Louisiana Adoption Resource Exchange (LARE) and AdoptUSKids website for identification and matching purposes.
- Out-of-state placements approved through Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC).
- Subsidized adoption is available for children with special needs due to physical, emotional or mental condition, race, age or membership in a sibling group. Adoption subsidy assistance may consist of financial payments, health coverage and special services issued to eligible adoptive parents.
- Provision of non-identifying medical/genetic information to adoptees and birth parents, and adoptive parents.
- Voluntary agreements for post adoption continued contact.
- Maintenance of court sealed adoption records and the Louisiana Voluntary Adoption Reunion Registry. This passive match registry is available to assist adult adoptees, age 18 years and older, their birth parents, and birth siblings for prospective reunions.
- Liaison with the Louisiana Adoption Advisory Board (LAAB).
- Membership with the Association of Administrators of the Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance.
- Compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act/Indian Self-Determination Act of 1994.

**On-Going Services**

- Maintain and improve a quality assurance review system for the adoption program to improve the outcome of service provision for children in care.
- Place special emphasis on recruitment activities for adoptive placements of children age 8 and older.
- Develop and implement public awareness campaigns (i.e. annual adoption celebration, media recruitment, conference presentations, etc.) aimed to increase the number of placements for children.
- Collaboration with federal/state IV-E programs and the Social Security Administration for determining post-adoption assistance.
- Utilization of adoption incentive awards to recruit families and support adoptive placements.
- Implementation of the Inter-country Adoption Act of 2000, being mindful of the requirements and protections afforded children who are adopted into the United States from other countries and living in Louisiana.
- Maintenance of national accreditation standards for the Adoption program through the Council on Accreditation (COA).
- Refer families to Foster and Adoptive Family Resource Centers (FAFRC) for supportive services.
- Utilization of post-placement and post-adoption services. (Respite and other supportive services through resource centers).
- Provide ongoing training opportunities for staff to increase knowledge on the adoption process.
- Promote public/private collaboration to identify adoption resources and strategies to promote permanency for children with a goal of adoption.
- Maintenance of Bridge and Adoption Resource families to be used while children make the transition between programs.
- Convene statewide Adoption/Home Development exchange meetings so that information on available families and children can be shared and placements can be considered.
- Develop and monitor annual contracts for child specific recruitment.

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- Enhance statewide recruitment/retention of foster/adoptive homes by collaborating with National Resource Centers, community stakeholders, and faith based organizations.
- Identify child specific systemic barriers to adoption and develop plans to overcome barriers.

### **2.8.E.1 Adoption Incentive Payments Awards Fiscal Year 2005-2009**

Adoption incentive payments are used in initiatives to encourage more adoptions of foster children and promote efficiencies in the adoption process. Funding will be utilized for the following initiatives:

- Purchase of in-state and out-of-state services with private licensed adoption agencies.
- Statewide recruitment initiatives.
- Regional recruiter contracts.
- Adoption training opportunities and continued education.
- Post adoption services to children, adoptive families and birth parents.
- Additional or temporary staff, overtime compensation, and/or equipment or materials to eliminate barriers; expedite adoptive placements and/or support post adoptive placements.
- Annual adoption celebration and on-going adoption exchanges.
- Staff attendance at the North American Council on Adoptable Children Conference.

### **2.8.E.2 Inter-Country Adoption**

The Office of Community Services will continue to implement the Intercountry Adoption Act of 2000 (ICAA) by providing post-adoptive services for adoptive families who adopt a child from another country. The services include case management, post-adoptive counseling (funded through post adoptive grants) and services provided through foster/adoptive family resource centers. The services are the same for families who have adopted internationally as for families who have adopted a child(ren) from within the State.

**2.9 Staff Training and Development**

The training and staff development plan is responsive to the need for staff development and to the goals and objectives of the Agency. The plan includes the use of nationally recognized experts and resources and is focused on the needs of trainees.

**Overview**

OCS provides the following overview of the approaches to training and staff development:

- Mandated training for child welfare staff.
- Implementation of state and federal regulations which require certain hours and topics of training be delivered to staff working for OCS in the field of child welfare.
- Incorporation of Program Improvement Plan (PIP) initiatives into the overall training plans. OCS will expand training to staff as topics and requirements emanate from PIP.
- A comprehensive survey of foster and adoptive parents and child welfare staff will be conducted to ascertain training needs. Utilizing Title IV-E funding, Southern University/Baton Rouge will be engaged for this purpose. Completion of this effort will have benefits for OCS: influence how and what training is planned and delivered; improve compliance with accreditation standards; and, continually upgrade the professional nature of child welfare practice in the State.
- Collaboration with the public universities who have Masters level Social Work Programs. These universities are: Louisiana State University, Southern University of New Orleans and (SUNO), Grambling State University. The universities will support overall and continued professionalization of social work in the child welfare field.

To accomplish continued professionalization of social work in the child welfare field, during Year One of the Child and Family Services Plan, for 2004-2005, the Title IV-E Stipend recipients are as follows:

Southern University	4 – Bachelor of Social Work Stipend Recipients
Louisiana State University	5 – Master of Social Work Stipend Recipients
Southeastern Louisiana University	5 – Bachelor of Social Work Stipend Recipients
Grambling State University	8 – 3 Bachelor of Social Work Stipend Recipients
	5 – Master of Social Work Stipend Recipients
University of Louisiana in Monroe	5 – Bachelor of Social Work Stipend Recipients
Southern University of New Orleans	8 – 7 Bachelor of Social Work Stipend Recipients
	1 Master of Social Work Stipend Recipients
Northwestern Louisiana University	<u>4</u> – Bachelor of Social Work Stipend Recipients
Total Stipends	39

**Federal Training Requirements**

In keeping with national staff development principles, the Agency has moved to a Competency-Based/Performance Directed Curriculum Model. This model incorporates a multidimensional approach to learning by offering varied learning experiences relating to specific competencies. It categorizes courses into three levels of professional maturation – basic, intermediate and advanced. Some courses span two levels. Competencies reflect the worker’s ability to perform particular job-related tasks that require various levels of proficiency. By addressing competencies, the model focuses on the participant’s use of knowledge and skills in effective performance of the job. The basic and intermediate competencies are addressed in the core curriculum. Most of these courses build on each other and are therefore taken in a specified sequence. Some of the courses stand alone and may be taken at any time.

Staff are encouraged to complete the core curriculum in the first three years of employment. Through this approach the Agency endeavors to provide staff with one of the most comprehensive child welfare curricula in the country.

**A. Brief Syllabus/Duration of Training Activity**

1. Adoption Assessor Training: Tier 1 – This course is directed at increasing the skills of adoption staff. The primary topics addressed are communicating more effectively with the child, assessing the child’s needs, preparing the child for adoption, selecting an appropriate placement and helping the child integrate his past and present in order to move into a future adoptive family. Course length: 24 hours
2. Adoption Assessor Training: Tier II – This course focuses on topics of cultural issues in permanency planning, achieving permanency through interagency collaboration, openness in adoption and gathering and documenting background information. Course length: 24 hours
3. Attention Deficit Disorder -- A New “ADDitude” – This curriculum is encouraged for those individuals who work/live with ADD children or adults. Topics address the history of ADD, symptoms, assessment of ADD, medications and treatment, the law and ADD, as well as other topics. Course length: 5 hours
4. Blood Borne Pathogens – Online – This is mandatory training required within three months of hiring and every three years thereafter. The purpose is to give participants a general understanding of hazards associated with the exposure to blood in the workplace and basic methods to help minimize exposure. Course length: 2 hours
5. Case Planning and the Family Team Conference – This course teaches the case planning process and use of the Family Team Conference. Agenda topics are: working with hostile and passive parents, enhancing communication in teams, including foster parents in team decision making, and when to include children of varying ages and abilities in team meetings. Course focuses on provisions of Public Law 96-272. Course length: 21 hours

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6. Case Planning: A New Approach – this course stresses the importance of proper case planning to assure timely, high quality services to families; and present casework as the preferred intervention method to promote family preservation, permanence for children, and positive change. Course length: 15 hours
7. Casework and Assessment – this course provides participants with the basic knowledge, principles, and functions of the state’s Foster Care and Family Services programs to assist caseworkers with their basic tasks and responsibilities. It addresses the tenants of federal law, placement, visitation, social summaries, maintaining placements, assessing dysfunctional families and case termination. The major tenants of P.L. 96-272 and the Adoption and Safe Families Act are addressed. Course length: 24 hours
8. Caseworker Competency – This course emphasizes the professional aspects of the caseworker’s role in the practice of Child Welfare. Individual and family assessment skills, case monitoring, and evaluation requirements are focused on. Course length: 24 hours
9. Child Sexual Abuse: Identification and Investigation -- This course addresses the basics of child sexual abuse exploring myths and facts about child sexual abuse. Course length: 18 hours
10. Child and Family Service Review (CFSR) – This course focuses on providing participants with an overview of the CFSR. The three major outcomes of Safety, Permanency, and Well-Being are explained and applied to case examples. Course length: 6 hours
11. CPR for Family and Friends – This course is designed to teach participants what to do in a life-threatening emergency through the American Heart Association’s course in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation for Family and Friends. Course length: 3 hours
12. CPI/FS Fundamental Casework Decisions – This course provides participants with the basic knowledge, principles and functions of the state’s Foster Care and Family Services Programs to assist caseworkers with their basic tasks and responsibilities. Course length: 25 hours
13. Cultural Competence in Child Welfare – This training was developed by Spaulding for Children. Participants have the opportunity to increase cultural competence in their practice by learning about different cultural groups, strengthening services to diverse families and communities and learning collaboration skills. Course length: 9 hours
14. Cultural Competency – Building Bridges Not Walls – This course is focused on heightening employee awareness of personal values and to increase acceptance of differences. Course length: 9 hours

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15. Deciding Together – This program is based on the MAPP/GPS Program and is a train-the-trainer curriculum to help home development staff prepare families to foster/adopt. Developed by the Child Welfare Institute, Atlanta Georgia.  
Course length: 15 hours
16. Documentation Skills – This course is designed to give all staff a basic understanding of the types of documentation with emphasis placed on writing thorough, accurate accounts for case records. Course length: 6 hours
17. Driver Safety: Next Step Coaching – This course is for Agency staff who have cause to use state owned vehicles or a personally owned vehicle in carrying out day to day work related responsibilities. This course is mandatory once each three years.  
Course length: 1.5 hours
18. The Effects of Abuse and Neglect on Child Development: Part 1 – Newborn through Preschool Aged Children, Part 2 – School Aged – Adolescent Aged Children – Participants focus on applying knowledge in working with children and families with special emphasis placed on the effect of abuse and neglect on “normal” child development at all ages and stages of growth. Course length: 18 hours total
19. Enhancing Job Interviewing Skills – This course is designed to provide employees with tools necessary to develop strategies and techniques for evaluating job applicants.  
Course length: 11 hours
20. Ethics: Another Look – This curriculum focuses on the Louisiana Code of Ethics, the OCS Vision, Core Values and Mission Statement. Ethical dilemmas facing agency staff are addressed. Course length: 4.5 hours
21. Ethics for Foster Parents – This curriculum is designed to give foster and adoptive parents guidelines for ethical behavior in their roles with children and with the agency.  
Course length: 4 hours
22. Ethics in the Workplace – This curriculum focuses on the OCS Code of Ethics, the OCS Core Values and Mission Statement. Ethical dilemmas facing agency staff are also addressed. Course length: 5 hours
23. First Aid (Basic) – This course is offered through the American Heart Association. Course content includes core content of general principles, medical emergencies, and injury emergencies. Course length: 4 hours
24. The Goals and Roles of the Supervisor (Supervisory Level 2) – this course examines the experiences/issues of new supervisors, the first key tasks of supervisors, and provides new supervisors with an opportunity to examine their leadership style.  
Course length: 12 hours

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25. ICPC Basic – Staff learn the provisions of the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children and review procedures related to the Compact along with forms and supporting documents. Course length: 4 hours
26. Independent Living/Positive Youth Development – This training focuses on providing staff and foster parents with tools to take a positive approach to working with youth. Course length: 9 hours
27. Interviewing Skills for Sexual Abuse Investigations – This course promotes interviewing competencies that improve interactions to enhance/increase the amount and accuracy of information provided by children and adults during sexual abuse investigations. Course length: 15 hours
28. Introduction to Child Protective Services – This curriculum provides an overview of the Louisiana Child Welfare system and an orientation to the Agency. Course length: 26 hours
29. Life Books – This training presents a strong therapeutic orientation to Life Books as tools to help foster children in working through grief and trauma, and to adapt to the journey of placement in foster care. Course length: 6 hours
30. Leadership – this curriculum offers leadership skills to promote the goals of improvement in the development of future leaders and strengthening current management staff. Management, communication, team building and motivation are covered in the training. Course length: 18 hours
31. Louisiana Standardized Child Passenger Safety Awareness Program – The goal of the course is to create awareness of the importance of child passenger safety education in preventing child passenger deaths. Course length: 8 hours
32. Model Approach to Partnership in Parenting/Group Preparation and Selection Assessment – The purpose of the course is to provide staff with information, instructions, and policy guidelines necessary to draft a homestudy/assessment. There is a focus on 12 skills to use and integrate into the homestudy. Course length: 18 hours
33. Model Approach to Partnership in Parenting/Group Preparation and Selection Leader Certification -- Completion of this course will certify home development staff as facilitators of pre-service classes for prospective foster and adoptive parents. Topics include an overview of fostering, adopting, how children enter care, helping children with grief, attachment, birth family and separation issues, and the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act/Inter-Ethnic Adoption Placement Act. Course length: 48 hours



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34. MINI MAPP/GPS – This is a condensed version of the 48-hour MAPP/GPS training offered to home development staff and foster/adoptive parents. It is designed to give Agency staff in primary programs an understanding of the certification processes and philosophy of certification. Course length: 9 hours
35. Maximizing Job Performance Through Supervision (Supervisory Level 1) – This course is to raise staff’s level of awareness regarding the impact of culture, gender, attitude and generational differences on supervision. Course length: 6 hours
36. Physical Indicators of Child Maltreatment – This course helps staff recognize physical indicators of child abuse and neglect and to describe these observations using objective language. Course length: 6 hours
37. Presentation Skills – This curriculum is designed to build on competencies obtained during MAPP/GPS Leader Certification Training. The emphasis is placed on various tools and techniques that can assist leaders in making more effective presentations. Course length: 15 hours
38. Promoting Excellence Through Supervision (Supervisory Level 3) – This course will help supervisors explore how they dramatically affect the learning and development of their staff. Course length: 16 hours
39. Recruitment and Retention Strategies: Measure Twice, Cut Once – This curriculum focuses on agency recruitment and retention practices. The training examines strategies for “getting and keeping” foster and adoptive parents. Course length: 18 hours
40. Safety Part II – This course provides an overview of personal safety issues while in the field, and during home and office contacts. Course length: 6 hours
41. Sexual Harassment in the Workplace – This curriculum is a one-hour program for all staff with content designed to make staff aware of what constitutes sexual harassment in the workplace. Course length: 1 hour
42. Shared Parenting – This course’s content is designed to build specific skills and abilities of experienced foster and adoptive parents. Course length: 24 hours
43. Stress Management – This course focuses on the management of stress in life and in professional situations. Course length: 5 hours
44. Substance Abuse: What Every Parent Should Know – The curriculum provides basic information on substance abuse and its relationship to child maltreatment. Focus is on drug classification and indicators of substance abuse. Course length: 5 hours

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45. Substance Abuse: Working with the Family – The curriculum provides basic information on substance abuse and its relationship to child maltreatment. Helpful interventions are presented and relapse dynamics and risk assessment techniques are examined. Course length: 21 hours
46. Supervision and Case Consultation (Supervisory Level 4) – This course examines the critical roles of supervisors in assuring that the intervention provided to clients will facilitate achievement of outcomes. Course length: 24 hours
47. Time Management – This curriculum offers several self-assessments to give awareness and insight to time management styles and provides tips on how to change that style to increase efficiency. Course length: 5 hours
48. Trans-cultural Parenting – “Love is not enough” – This training offers insight and skills for parents who realize “Love is not enough” and who want to know what to do in addition. Course length: 4 hours
49. Violence in the Workplace – This curriculum is a one-hour program for all staff. The content is designed to make staff aware of what constitutes violence in the workplace through presentation of videotape, policy, procedure and discussion. Course length: 1 hour

The following describes courses that are self-instructional. Workbooks are provided to newly hired staff to supplement on-the-job experiences and formal classroom learning. Employees read the material, record information, respond to questionnaires, opinion surveys and quizzes.

1. Orientation Handbook – This handbook provides an orientation to the Department of Social Services, Office of Community Services. The training requirements for the first six months of employment is explained and it provides a unit on historical background of child welfare services in the United States. Course length: 9 hours
2. Serenity, Courage & Wisdom Workbook – The workbook presents a stress management mini course that provides new employees in thinking through potential stressors in a Child Welfare setting and provides coping techniques and addresses issues regarding personality types. Course length: 15 hours
3. Child Development Workbook – This course covers the basic principles of child development in the physical, sexual, moral cognitive, language, and social/emotional areas. Normal developmental guidelines are included along with a pretest of the worker’s knowledge of child development. Course length: 16 hours
4. Child Abuse and Neglect Workbook – This workbook is an introduction to indicators and dynamics of child abuse and neglect. Course length: 16 hours

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5. Team Workbook – This workbook introduces the employee to the knowledge and skills needed to be an effective team member. The value of teamwork is stressed, along with an explanation of characteristics of effective teams. Course length: 9 hours
6. Caseworker Competency Based Curriculum Supervisory Guide – This is a supervisor's guide for use in supervision of newly appointed caseworkers. Course length: 16 hours

Upon completion of a workbook, the staff person signs the workbook completion form and completes the workbook evaluation form. The supervisor signs the form confirming that the employee has completed all requirements. Written work generated by the workbook is reviewed by the supervisor and the supervisor discusses the content with the employee. The signed forms are then forwarded to the Training and Staff Development Unit.

### **B. Setting/venue for the training activity**

1. The majority of mandated training will continue to be provided on an ongoing basis in Baton Rouge. On some occasions, training is made available at the regionally designated training offices.

### **C. Duration and category of the training, i.e., short-term, long-term, part-time, full-time**

1. Training hours conducted range from one hour to one-week length sessions. The time frames, competencies, objectives, and targeted staff are described in full in the Training and Staff Development Catalog.

### **D. Proposed provider of the training activity**

1. Nationally recognized experts in child welfare will conduct training and provide consultation to staff. Additionally, technical assistance is requested from the Children's Bureau, ACF contracted national resource centers. In addition, training is provided by nationally recognized child welfare experts.
2. The majority of agency delivered and/or coordinated trainings are conducted by experienced OCS staff trainers who are licensed social workers and experienced in child welfare.

### **E. Audience to receive the training**

1. Depending on the training topics, sessions target audiences of newly hired and experienced staff, including paraprofessionals, foster and adoptive parents, front line staff and up through management levels.

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## **F. Estimated total cost/Indication of allowable Title IV-E administrations**

1. The training costs allocated to Title IV-E are based on Random Moment Sampling (RMS) procedures and “Stat Sheets” prepared by the Training Section of the Agency. Stat sheets serve to document and track training activities. RMS procedures capture the levels and types of staff activities that may be claimed as Title IV-E allowable expenditures.
2. OCS is projecting to expend \$7,437,048 in allowable Title IV-E cost during the federal fiscal year 2004-2005. These costs will be funded with 75% federal and 25% state general funds.
3. The Agency utilizes a random moment sampling process to identify training activities. Depending on the function being trained, the appropriate federal fund is claimed. Costs deemed matchable as training expenditures include: travel, per diem, tuition, books and registration fees for trainees; salaries, fringe benefits, travel and per diem for staff development personnel assigned to training functions to the extent of time spent performing such functions; costs of space, postage, training supplies, and purchase or development of training material.

It is recognized that all training activities and costs to be funded under Title IV-E must be included in the State agency’s training plan for Title IV-B. This plan is detailed within the document.

## **G. Cost allocation methodology**

1. Louisiana is entitled to federal matching funds for the proper and efficient administration of the state plan. The State’s federally approved Cost Allocation Plan (CAP) identifies which costs are allocated and claimed under Title IV-E and other benefiting programs. This approved CAP is in compliance with 45 CFR 1356.60.
2. The Agency has exercised the provisions of the Social Security Act, Sections 474 (a)(3)(A) and (B); 45 CFR 1356.60 (b) and (c), 235.63-235.66 (a) to make claims under Title IV-E at the 75% rate for training (including both short-term training and long-term training at educational institutions, through state grants to the public institutions or by direct financial assistance to students enrolled in such institutions) of personnel employed or preparing for employment by the state agency. The amount deemed claimable is specified in individual contracts with the institutions and individuals.
3. Under section 474 (a) (3) (B) of the Social Security Act, the state agency makes claim for available federal financial participation at the 75% rate for the short-term training of current or prospective foster or adoptive parents and the members of the staff of state-licensed or state-approved child care institutions providing care to foster and adopted children receiving assistance under this part, in ways that increase the ability

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of such current or prospective parents, staff members, and institutions to provide support and assistance to foster and adoptive children, whether incurred directly by the State or by contract. These costs are isolated in expense forms submitted for processing and contracts with trainers.

**2.10 John H. Chafee Independence Program and Education and Training Vouchers**

The Department of Social Services will administer or supervise the administration of the State's program of John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) and Education and Training Vouchers Program (ETV). Payments to the State shall be used for the purpose of conducting and providing (directly or under contract with local governmental entities or private organizations) the activities and services required to carry out the programs involved. The number for Department of Social Services is 726000800. The State is applying for the matching grant amount of \$1,358,131.00 that is allocated to Louisiana for the Federal Fiscal Year 2005 and the matching grant amount of \$400,401.00 for the Education and Training Vouchers Program that is allocated to Louisiana for the Federal Fiscal Year 2005

Betty Becker, Child Welfare Specialist 5, is the contact person for the CFCIP in Louisiana. Her address is the Office of Community Services, P.O. Box 57149, New Orleans, LA 70157 and her telephone number is (504) 568-8003. Her fax number is (504) 568-7491 and her email address is bbecker@dss.state.la.us.

The Department of Social Services, Office of Community Services will cooperate in national evaluations of the effects of the programs in achieving the purposes of CFCIP [(Section 477(b)(2)(F)].

**2.10.A Description of the CFCIP Program**

The Agency has designed, conducted and strengthened its programs to :

- Help youth transition to self-sufficiency;
- Help youth receive the education, training and services necessary to obtain employment;
- Help youth prepare for and enter postsecondary training and education institutions;
- Provide personal and emotional support to youth through mentors and the promotion of interactions with dedicated adults;
- Provide financial, housing, counseling, employment, education and other appropriate support and services to former foster care recipients 18 years and older up to 21 years of age; and
- Make available vouchers for education and training, including postsecondary training and education to youths who have aged out of foster care.

The Agency will serve eligible youth 15 years old up to age 21 who are likely to remain in foster care until age 18 and former foster care recipients who are 18 years up to age 21 who have aged out of foster care. These groups will be served regardless of Title IV-E eligibility. The phrase, youth likely to remain in foster care until age 18, is defined as follows:

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- Youth who are placed in the custody of the State of Louisiana, adjudicated in Need of Care or supervision, and for whom payments are being made for their care or supervision either through state or federal funding sources; and
- Are in the custody of the State of Louisiana at the age of 15 years or older.

Some identifiers of youth likely to remain in foster care until 18 include, but are not limited to age, ethnicity, presenting problems, case histories and individual case goals and objectives. The services delivered under this program are designed and conducted to help the youth identified as likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age prepare to live independently and transition to self sufficiency. Eligible participants may receive services from 15 years of age and older up to 21 years old for CFCIP.

The phrase, youth aging out of foster care, is defined as follows:

- Youth who were placed in the custody of the State of Louisiana, adjudicated in need of care payments are being made for their care or supervision either through state or federal funding sources;
- Youth who were in foster care on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday when custody was automatically vacated;
- Youth who are in need of continued assistance to complete an educational program, vocational program or obtain employment;
- Youth who are between the ages of 18 or older up to 21 years old;
- Youth who voluntarily contract to continue in the Young Adult Program; and
- Youth who attend college, high school to obtain a high school diploma, GED classes, vocational training or are obtaining employment within three months.

This objective criteria was developed in consultation with the youth in CFCIP programs, youth, in the Young Adult Program, CFCIP providers, foster parents, public and private organizations, and the general public.

The Agency has taken steps to avoid any barriers or problems that might exist in the implementation of services. Computer printouts showing the number of children between the ages of 15 up to 21 years of age will be sent to each region to assure that each eligible and participating youth's record contains a plan specific to achieving independence. These case plans for 15 to 18 year old participants are reviewed every six months by Quality Assurance staff to verify that case activities are in compliance with Agency policy and regulations. Planning conferences for eighteen to twenty-year-old participants are held at six-month intervals to discuss the clients' progress toward achieving their plan for self-sufficiency. In addition, a listing of all

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foster children who will be age 15 during the next fiscal year will be sent to each region showing the number of eligible children by parish.

Louisiana has been a leader in meeting the needs of former foster children many years before the CFCIP legislation was passed. The Office of Community Services has provided room and board, educational and vocational training, employment assistance and other support and services with state funds to former foster children 18 years and older up to 21 years of age in a program called the Young Adult Program.

The criteria for youth aging out of foster care used for CFCIP is the same criteria used in the Young Adult Program. Services delivered under this program are also designed and conducted to help eligible former foster care youth between the ages 18 up to 21 years to complement their own efforts to achieve self-sufficiency and accept their personal responsibility to prepare and transition to adulthood while providing personal and emotional support. Room and board includes housing, food and other expenses such as rental deposits and utilities, etc.

The Office of Community Services will contract with ten private providers to deliver services funded by CFCIP during the federal fiscal years of 2005-2009. The CFCIP contractors will provide the following services and activities during this time period:

- Establishment of outreach programs designed to attract individuals who are eligible to participate in the program;
- Development with each participant a written transitional independent living plan which is based on an assessment of needs, and which is incorporated into the individual case plan;
- Training in daily living skills such as budgeting, locating and maintaining housing, preventive health activities and career planning;
- Services designed to enable participants to secure a high school diploma, its equivalent, higher educational opportunities and appropriate vocational training or employment;
- Provision of support services and assistance designed to improve each participant's transition;
- Integration and coordination of services otherwise available to participants and provision of transportation to services when needed;
- Youth Advisory Boards to provide opportunities for Positive Youth Development;
- Specialized training and consultation for foster parents and other child care providers to build skills in working with this specific population of foster children;
- Training of foster care staff on assessment, case planning, and implementation of independent living plans for foster children;



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- Provision of a system for tracking expenditures and program outcomes to assure accountability;
- Assessment of existing programmatic and systemic barriers to the successful transition of a youth into independent living; and
- Provision of vouchers for education and training, including post secondary education to youth who have aged out of foster care.

CFCIP providers will conduct extensive outreach efforts to offer services to eligible participants. The Office of Community Services will provide quarterly printouts to providers so they can be aware of names and location of all eligible youth in foster care and the Young Adult Program. Youth will be contacted and will be made aware of the services available. CFCIP providers will also do community outreach to raise community awareness of the program.

Developmentally appropriate services will be provided to eligible participants. The age and maturity level of the participants will direct service delivery. For example, services needed by youth 15 up to 18 years old may differ from services needed by youth over 18 years old and the amount of personal responsibility for achieving the objectives will increase for youth over 18 years of age. Services for youth at age 15 provides opportunities for positive youth development and planning for the future. Services for the age group 16-18 focus on the transition from foster care to preparation for independent living and educational, vocational or employment opportunities.

The CFCIP providers teaching the daily living skills training will have the youth complete an initial assessment of independent living skills using the Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment. A written individual transitional independent living plan of services will be developed with the youth based on the initial needs assessment and the plan will be incorporated into the case plan for the individual. A post-test using the Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment will be conducted to assess the youth's progress.

CFCIP providers will offer an array of daily living skills training. The training encompasses assistance with budgeting/money management, housing, career planning, employment preparation, education, communication, personal care, human sexuality, consumer awareness, safety and community resources. Some providers also will offer parenting classes in addition to the daily living skills training.

CFCIP providers also will offer counseling for youth in the program. Counseling on an individual basis and in groups with the young adults will be a critical part of the CFCIP programs, and will increase the youth's ability to utilize the independent living skills taught. CFCIP providers also will participate in Family Team Conferences and discharge planning conferences when requested to provide information and assist in the planning for youth. CFCIP providers will give youth opportunities for positive role models as part of their CFCIP program in many ways. The staffs of the CFCIP providers will assume a mentoring role for youth as they provide services and model effective advocacy. Several types of interns from

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various universities, colleges, hospitals and other institutions will work with CFCIP providers. These interns come from psychology, social work, sociology, dietary and nursing fields and will work one on one with the youth. The interns also will provide positive role models for the youth, and will encourage leadership among youth.

The providers of CFCIP services will maintain integration and coordination of services for youth in Louisiana by their community networking efforts. Information about and referral to any other needed source of community services will be an essential component provided by the CFCIP programs.

Regional Youth Advisory Boards and the State Youth Advisory Boards will continue to operate with the assistance of the CFCIP providers. The Youth Advisory Boards will present youth with opportunities for positive role models and leadership training. The Youth Advisory Boards will be assisting the CFCIP providers in the planning and implementation of the annual Youth Conference and continue advising the Agency.

Another service component of CFCIP providers' programs will include specialized training and consultation for foster parents and other child care providers to build skills in working with this specific population of foster children. CFCIP providers will also train foster care staff on assessment, case planning, and implementation of independent living plans for foster children. Positive Youth Development training will be emphasized in the training of these groups. Title IV-E training funds for foster care and adoption assistance will continue to be used to provide training to help foster care workers, foster parents, adoptive parents, and workers in group homes understand and address issues confronting youth preparing for independent living

The Office of Community Services CFCIP Child Welfare Specialist will continue to be the liaison to the CFCIP providers to assure accountability. The Child Welfare Specialist will execute the contracts, review the monthly cost reports and evaluate the program. CFCIP providers will be required to submit quarterly reports regarding services and clients served. Foster care workers and Young Adult Program foster care workers will receive quarterly progress reports on youth participating in the program from the CFCIP providers and they will monitor the youth's progress in the program.

In order to assess the CFCIP providers' individual program performance and compliance with state and federal requirements, the Office of Community Services CFCIP Child Welfare Specialist will use the Independent Living Skills Program Monitoring Instrument in her review of each CFCIP provider. The in-depth review of each program will include interviews with management and direct care staff, reviews of program, financial and client records. The programs will be reviewed to determine compliance with federal and state standards, service planning and service delivery including an examination of individual client records, staffing issues, record keeping and fiscal operations. Youth participating in CFCIP programs also will complete questionnaires on their opinion of the CFCIP program and quality of services provided. The Office of Community Services CFCIP Child Welfare Specialist will continue to be also the liaison to the Louisiana Coalition of Independent Living Skills Providers. The Coalition will continue to be composed of all the CFCIP providers in the State. The Coalition meets quarterly

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as a forum to exchange information, define barriers and problems and develop a unified approach to solving problems in the CFCIP programs.

In addition to the previously described services provided with CFCIP funds, the Office of Community Services will continue to offer additional services with state funds or other federal funds to former foster care youth ages 18 years up to 21 years old in the Young Adult Program. These services such as room and board, educational or vocational, clothing and other support services were offered years before the CFCIP legislation. When a former foster care youth decides that he or she wants to voluntarily participate in the Young Adult Program, the youth and the Agency will sign a contract specifying the services needed, roles and responsibilities of the parties. An array of appropriate living arrangements will be provided such as foster family homes, college dormitories, supervised apartments, and independent apartment living.

Youth will continue to be eligible to participate in the Young Adult Program from age 18 until they reach age 21. Youth may contract at age 18 years old or within six months of leaving care. Youth leaving the Young Adult Program may also return to participate again in the program if they return within six month of leaving. Youth will be required to meet the criteria listed in youth aging out of foster care. CFCIP funds not to exceed 30% of CFCIP may also be utilized to pay for room and board for any youth in the Young Adult Program when the Young Adult Program's budget is exhausted.

For youth remaining in certified foster homes after age 18, the Agency will continue to pay the foster parents for the room and board costs for the youth with state funds. Foster care workers for youth in foster homes will monitor their progress in the foster homes and in their educational or vocational training programs. Each youth's plan will includes costs for any needed services such as clothing, transportation, educational, vocational or employment assistance.

Supervised apartment programs will continue to be operated by private providers reimbursed by the Office of Community Services according to agreements. The reimbursement of costs will include the rent, utilities, clothing, food, transportation, personal items and allowance. These costs will be paid with state funding. CFCIP funds will also be provided for start-up costs for needed items for apartment living. The foster care workers for youth placed in a supervised apartment programs will monitor their progress on a monthly basis and will provide case management to coordinate any other services needed. Each region will continue to have a Regional Placement Specialist who acts as a local liaison with the supervised apartment programs in that region. State Office Child Welfare Specialist will continue to be assigned as liaisons and also make site visits to the programs to evaluate their performance and compliance with federal and state guidelines.

For youth living in college dormitories, the Office of Community Services will pay the college or university directly for any costs for dormitory, tuition, books, and fees that is not cover by PELL grants, scholarships, or any other sources. Youth also will receive a monthly stipend for the costs of clothing, personal items, and allowance with state funds. This stipend will be paid directly to the youth. CFCIP funds will also be provided for start-up costs for any needed items

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## Child and Family Services Plan 2005 - 2009

## What We Do

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for dormitory living. Foster care workers for youth in college dormitories will continue to provide case management services and monitor the youth's progress in college.

For youth living independently in their own apartments while in an educational or vocational program, the Office of Community Services will pay directly to the youth a monthly stipend for living expenses. CFCIP will also provided for start-up costs for any needed items for apartment living and startup costs of apartment, telephone and water deposits. LIHEAP will continue to fund utility deposits. Foster care workers for youth in their own apartments will continue to provide case management services and any other support services needed, and monitor the youth's educational or vocational progress.

### **Description of the Education and Training Vouchers Program (ETV)**

The funding for the first time for the ETV program was approved on July 31, 2003. Contract application forms for ETV contracts were developed. Eight of the CFCIP providers submitted proposals to deliver ETV services. Proposals were reviewed and contracts were executed for the provision of ETV services across the state. In August and September, 2003, an application packet, educational plan, and reporting forms were developed for uniform implementation of the program.

Outreach to Eligible Program Participants will be achieved in numerous ways. Youth adopted after attaining the age of 16 years will be identified by use of our computerized tracking system (TIPS). The youth and their adopted family will contacted by mail informing them of their possibility eligibility for the Education and Training Voucher Program.

The computerized tracking system (TIPS) will also identify youth that were otherwise eligible for CFCIP because they are foster children or participants in the Young Adult Program. The foster care workers will be instructed to inform the youth or young adult of their eligibility for the ETV program and the workers will refer them to the ETV Coordinator in their region. For Office of Youth Development (OYD) youth, the staff of OYD will identify the youth, inform the youth of their eligibility for the ETV program and refer them to the ETV Coordinator in their region.

The computerized tracking system (TIPS) will also identify youth who are in post secondary institutions at the time they reach age 21 years and OYD identified OYD youth who are in post secondary institutions at the time they reach 21 years of age. The young adults will be contacted by mail at their last known address informing them of their possibility eligibility for the ETV Program.

All foster care workers and CFCIP providers will inform any young adults no longer in the Young Adult Program with whom they have contact of their possible eligibility. The Foster and Adoptive Parent Association will inform any young adults no longer in the Young Adult Program with whom they have contact of their possible eligibility. As an outreach effort, all post secondary institutions in the State were provided brochures on the ETV and will continue inform

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any youth indicating on question #57 on the FAFSA that they were previously in foster care that they may be eligible for the ETV program.

The Office of Community Services will continue to coordinate with other post secondary education and training programs in Louisiana. Other agencies included the Department of Education's Upward Bound Program, Department of Labor's Workforce Investment Programs, TANF Pre-GED/Skills Option, after school enrichment, training and support services, drop out prevention programs, Big Brothers/Big Sister of S.E.L.A. the Orphan Foundation of America Scholarship.

ETV Coordinators contacted these agencies and made them aware of the ETV program and the eligibility criteria. Youth in the ETV program will continue to be referred for any appropriate services available from any of these agencies.

Youth eligible for the ETV program will include:

- Youth ages 16 up to 21 years old who are eligible for services under CFCIP including youth likely to remain in foster care until age 18 and former foster care recipients who aged out of foster care with OCS or OYD, are enrolled in a post secondary education or training program as defined in section 101 and 102 of the Higher Education Act and making satisfactory progress toward completion of that program;
- Youth adopted from foster care after attaining the age of 16 who are enrolled in a postsecondary education or training program as defined in section 101 and 102 of the Higher Education Act, making satisfactory progress toward completion of that program and who have not attained 23 years of age; and
- Youth participating in the ETV program on the date they attain 21 years of age until they attain 23 years of age as long as they are enrolled in a postsecondary education or training program as defined in section 101 and 102 of the Higher Education Act and making satisfactory progress toward completion of that program.

Eligibility of present foster care status or previous foster care status will be determined by a check of the computerized system (TIPS). Eligibility of present OYD status or previous OYD status will be determined by a check of the computerized system to be completed by OYD. Each youth will complete the ETV application forms. The youth will prove his or her financial need by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to establish the student's cost of attendance (COA) as defined in section 472 of the Higher Education Act and expected family contribution (EFC) if the student was working. The student's financial need will be calculated by the financial aid administrator at the post secondary institution by taking the costs of attendance, subtracting the EFC if applicable, Pell Grant aid, aid from other sources as scholarships, etc.

The youth will provide documentation of the COA, EFC and financial need as determined by the financial aid administrator. Any aid from OCS will also be subtracted from the youth's cost of

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attendance to determine the youth's financial need. The youth will receive an education and training voucher assistance in the amount of the student's need, which shall not exceed the lesser of \$5,000. per year or the actual cost of attendance to the extent that ETV funds are available. When the ETV amount is calculated, the payments will be divided so only half of the total yearly amount will be paid each semester. Upon documentation of successful completion of the first semester, then the remaining half of the amount will be paid. The ETV Coordinator will report the amount of the ETV assistance to the post secondary institution that the youth attends to avoid duplication of benefits.

A youth attending a post-secondary institution must be enrolled in the appropriate number of class hours to qualify the youth as a full-time student and must complete the required number of hours to qualify as full-time.

The youth will submit his or her grades each semester or each quarter for the ETV Coordinator to evaluate the youth's progress and performance and to justify the continued expenditure of funds for education or training. The youth will have to complete the course work for full time enrollment at the post secondary institution each semester or quarter. The youth will not be allowed to continue at the post secondary institution, if the student has failed to maintain a cumulative 2.0 grade point average for two semesters after the first semester or what is considered a satisfactory level of performance, if an alternative grading system is used.

In order to develop a successful plan for completion of education or training, the youth in the ETV program will participate in a planning conference with the ETV Coordinator and the foster care worker. The youth may invite other significant persons such as the foster parent, child care provider, or educational counselors. The focus of the conference will be to assess the youth's strengths, needs, set educational goals and develop a plan to achieve the goals. The plan will be youth centered, youth driven, and the youth will be the most important person in the planning process.

The youth's foster care worker, ETV Coordinator and educational counselors will assist the youth in obtaining information on post secondary education and training alternatives. The youth will select their educational goals and the state funded post secondary institution they want to attend.

Each education or training plan for youth in the ETV program will include:

- A list of contact persons including secondary educational counselors, officials, and other support persons;
- A plan for successful completion of secondary education including any needed services such as tutoring, counseling, mentoring, or other support services;
- A plan for completing the required applications, tests, and financial aid forms;
- A plan for providing support during post-secondary educational attendance including, but not limited to, housing, child care, tutoring, and transportation; and

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- A budget listing the cost of attendance, grants, scholarships and the student's personal contribution if applicable, and the total amount of financial need as determined by the post secondary institution.

The development of the plan and periodic case reviews of the youth's progress will assure that the youth received the needed services to meet their educational or training needs and achieve their educational goals.

Post secondary educational services for youth under age 18 will be funded by a combination of federal funds, Title XX, Title IV-B, Title IV- E and state funding. Post secondary educational assistance will be funded by Title XX for youth in the Young Adult Program who are 18 years old up to 21 years old. The ETV funds will be used to supplement costs of post secondary education not covered by these sources of funding.

For youth in the Young Adult Program remaining in certified foster homes after age 18, the Office of Community Services will use state funds to pay the foster parents for the room and board costs for the youth. Funding is also available for counseling and tutoring, if needed. For youth living in foster homes and attending education or training programs, the Office of Community Services will pay the post secondary institution directly for any costs for tuition, books, and fees that are not funded by PELL grants, scholarships, or any other sources. For youth in YAP, the education costs will be paid with Title XX funds. ETV will cover other related educational expenses such as transportation, cost of a personal computer for education not to exceed the lesser of \$5,000 per year or the total cost of attendance to the extent that ETV funds were available.

For youth in the Young Adult Program living in supervised apartment programs while attending a post secondary educational or training program, the cost of room and board will be paid with state funding. The reimbursement of the per diem rate will include the rent, utilities, clothing, food, personal items and allowance. TANF funds were used to provide a \$300.00 start-up costs for youth in the supervised apartment programs, but this funding ended in September 2003. Since TANF funds are not available after September 2003 to provide \$300.00 start-up costs for youth in the supervised apartment program, CFCIP funds will be used for these uncovered living expenses.

For youth living in supervised apartments and attending education or training programs, the Office of Community Services will pay the post secondary institution directly for any costs for tuition, books, and fees that are not funded by PELL grants, scholarships, or any other sources. For youth in YAP, the education costs will be paid with Title XX funds. ETV will cover other related educational expenses such as transportation, cost of a personal computer for education or any miscellaneous living expenses not to exceed the lesser of \$5,000 per year or the total cost of attendance to the extent that ETV funds were available.

For youth in the Young Adult Program living in college dormitories while attending college, the Office of Community Services will pay the college or university directly for any costs for dormitory, meal ticket, tuition, books, and fees that are not cover by PELL grants, scholarships,

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or any other sources. For youth in YAP, the educational costs will be paid with Title XX funds. Youth will receive a monthly stipend paid with state funds for the costs of clothing, transportation, personal items, and allowance. This stipend of \$119 per month will be paid directly to the youth. However, the actual living expenses of the youth will exceed the monthly stipend provided. ETV funds will be used to cover the remaining costs of attendance including any uncovered living expenses and a personal computer not to exceed the lesser of \$5,000 per year or the total cost of attendance to the extent that ETV funds were available. TANF funds were used to provide \$300.00 for start-up costs for youth. TANF funding ended for start-up costs in September, 2003. Since TANF funds are no longer available, CFCIP funds will be used for these uncovered living expenses to provide \$300.00 for start-up costs.

For youth in the Young Adult Program living independently in their own apartments while attending an education or training program, the Office of Community Services will pay the college or university directly for any costs for tuition, books, and fees that are not covered by PELL grants, scholarships, or any other sources. For youth in YAP, the educational costs will be paid with Title XX funds. TANF funds were used to provide \$1500.00 start-up costs for youth and \$500 for apartment deposit, telephone deposit and water deposit. Utility deposits were paid with LIHEAP. TANF funding ended for start-up costs and deposits in September, 2003. CFCIP funds will be used for these uncovered living expenses to provide \$300.00 start-up costs and \$500 for deposits. LIHEAP will continue to cover the costs of utility deposits. The Office of Community Services will pay with state funds directly to the youth a monthly stipend of \$398 per month for living expenses. However, the actual cost of living expenses will exceed the monthly stipend. ETV will cover other related educational expenses such as living expenses, transportation, cost of a personal computer for education, not to exceed the lesser of \$5,000 or the total cost of attendance to the extent that ETV funds were available.

For OYD youth in post secondary education or training programs, the Office of Youth Development will continue to pay room and board for these youth. Previously, any education or training costs remaining after the PELL grant, scholarships or other sources were not paid by OYD. ETV funds will be used to cover tuition, dormitory or living expenses, books, fees, transportation, child care, tutoring, personal computer or any other cost of attendance not to exceed the lesser of \$5,000 per year or the total cost of attendance to the extent that ETV funds were available.

In the past, OCS did not fund youth adopted after age 16 to attend post-secondary education or training programs. ETV funds will be used to pay tuition, dormitory or living expenses, books, fees, transportation, child care, tutoring, personal computer or any other cost of attendance not to exceed the lesser of \$5,000 per year or the total cost of attendance to the extent that ETV funds were available.

For foster children under 18 who are attending post-secondary education or training programs, the Office of Community Services will pay the education or training program directly for any costs for tuition, books, dormitory, meal tickets, and fees that were not paid by PELL grants, scholarships, or any other sources. The education costs for foster children will be paid with Title XX, Title IV-B, Title IV- E and state funding. ETV funds will be used to cover the cost of



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## Child and Family Services Plan 2005 - 2009

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a personal computer or any other cost of attendance not presently funded not to exceed the lesser of \$5,000 per year or the total cost of attendance to the extent that ETV funds were available.

### **Development and Coordination of CFCIP and ETV Program**

Even before passage of Subtitle C, Section 121 of Public Law 106-169, Louisiana provided Medicaid services for youth ages 18 up to the age of 21 who were in foster care until their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and continued in the in the Young Adult Program. The youth will continue to be required to attend college, high school to obtain a high school diploma, GED classes, vocational training or obtain employment within three months. These youth continue to be reasonable categories of foster care youth to receive Medicaid services.

The Office of Community Services has established procedures through which service applicants and recipients may present grievances that may arise from the operation of the program and/or services including this program. CFCIP contractors also have established procedures through which service applicants and recipients may present grievances which may arise from the operation of the program and/or services provided under their contractual agreement. Contractors shall advise applicants and recipients of this right and shall advise them of their rights to appeal and to receive a Fair Hearing according to OCS policy. CFCIP contractors have also agreed to comply with all applicable state and federal laws, such as Equal Opportunities Act prohibiting discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex or national origin and prohibiting discrimination based on disabilities.

All political subdivisions of the State will be served by the program. Each of the ten regions in the State has at least one private service provider under contract to the Agency for delivery of independent living services. Services and activities in each location are subject to availability of funds. Services will be available to American Indian children from federally recognized tribes in the state on the same basis as other children.

The Agency will continue to consult with representatives of public and private organizations, American Indian tribes, and representatives of other federal and state programs for youth, foster children, and foster parents regarding development of the State Plan. Representatives consulted may include, but are not limited to the following organizations: Transitional Living Program, Residential Supervised Apartment Program providers, HUD, Louisiana Vocational Rehabilitation, Independent Living Skills Providers Coalition, Foster Parents Association, Foster Care Independent Program participants, Department of Health and Hospitals, Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities, Office of Mental Health, Office of Addictive Disorders, Department of Education, and Department of Labor.

The Agency will continue to make efforts to coordinate with other Federal and State programs for youth, such as Office for Youth Development, HUD, Department of Health and Hospitals, Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities, Department of Education, Department of Labor, to help adolescents in foster care achieve independence. The Department of Social Services will cooperate in the national evaluations of the effects of the programs implemented to achieve the purposes of the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP). In order to

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participate in this process, by administrative policy, any research project involving agency clients will have to be approved at the Agency level.

The Office of Community Services has consulted widely with public and private organizations in developing a service delivery plan. The Office of Community Services asked for comments from the following groups: CFCIP Providers, Baton Rouge Transitional Living Program, Youth Oasis., Louisiana Foster and Adoptive Parent Association, Department of Labor, HUD, Housing Authorities, Independent Living Center Supervised Apartments, Community Independent Living Systems Supervised Apartments, Southern University School of Social Work, Louisiana State University School of Social Work, Volunteers of America, Office of Youth Development, Office of Workforce Development, Louisiana School to Work Office, Louisiana Rehabilitation Services, Office of Mental Health, Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Advisory Board, Department of Health and Hospitals, Office of Family Support, Family Independent Work Program, Fair Housing, Department of Education, Division of Adult Education and Training, Corrections Service, Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities, Capital Area Human Services District, Office of Adult Services, and many others.

Regional Youth Advisory Boards were established in 2000 in the regions of the State. Youth Advisory Boards meet quarterly or more frequently when working on specific projects. The Youth Advisory Boards worked on numerous projects such as a handbook for youth coming into Care and the annual State Youth Conference. Youth Advisory Board members, and youth participating in the present CFCIP were asked for their comments on the plan.

Consultation and comment was also sought from all federally recognized American Indian tribes in Louisiana. Representatives were informed that benefits and services under the program are available to Indian children from federally recognized tribes in the State on the same basis as other children in the State.

The Office of Community Services has worked and continues to work to bring our stakeholders more into the process of planning for development of the Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR). One means that was used was by public hearings, which has been used on the state level for a number of years. The public is informed of this public hearing by means of a public notice in the seven leading newspapers of the state.

Another approach to involving stakeholders used this year was by means of an OCS sponsored video conference. The idea was to inform stakeholders of this process, to invite them, give them parts of the APSR to review, and have them participate in a video conference. The public hearing and video conference was conducted on March 11, 2004. The hearing was held in State Office in Baton Rouge and from that location, the video connection was made to the regional offices of the state.

The Agency has also collaborated with other State and Federal programs for youth in providing services to assist youth in foster care to achieve independence. Specifically, the Agency has partnered with various agencies in a collaboration to establish and continue to operate Youth Oasis, a transition living program funded under Part B of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency

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Prevention Act of 1974 to provide housing and other services to homeless and former foster care youth.

The Office of Community Services has coordinated with other State agencies, such as the Department of Health and Hospitals, Office of Citizens with Developmental Disabilities and Bureau of Community Supports and Services to identify foster children and former foster children who may be eligible for services for mentally retarded or developmentally delayed youth. The coordination has resulted in access to federally funded Medicaid Waiver services and other community based services.

Likewise, the Agency has coordinated with the Department of Health and Hospitals, Office of Mental Health and Office of Addictive Disorders to identify foster children and former foster children who may be eligible for federally funded services such as community outpatient, inpatient, and Mental Health Rehabilitation Option services. Interagency staffing is the mechanism used to coordinate and access services from these agencies.

The Agency has collaborated with the Louisiana Department of Labor to develop a joint welfare-to-work policy guidance for both departments to eliminate any barriers in the referral of foster children and former foster children for services and to simplify the referral process. The Agency was also involved in the Department of Labor's Collaboration of community agencies in development of guidelines for the Youth Councils under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. The Agency also participated in a collaborative conference on Louisiana Youth presented by the Louisiana Department of Education, Louisiana Community and Technical College System, Louisiana Department of Labor, Louisiana Board of Regents, and the Governor's Office of Workforce Commission/School-to-Work.

Title IV-E training funds for foster care and adoption assistance is being used to provide training to help foster care workers, foster parents, adoptive parents, and workers in group homes understand and address issues confronting youth preparing for independent living. Positive Youth Development training and training on the policy and services of the CFCIP will continue to be training topics.

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**Part II - FY 2005**

**CFCIP Funds Requested**

CFCIP Federal Funds Requested: \$ 1,358,131.00

We presently have ten private contractors who provide services in the CFCIP to the foster children and former foster children of Louisiana. The total amount of these contracts is \$ 1,285,131.00. Amount of CFCIP Federal Funds to be used for room and board for youth aging out of foster care from 18 years old up to 21 years old is \$35,000. Administrative charges are budgeted for \$38,000.

State Match Amount: \$339,533.00

Sources of State Match:

1. Private providers in kind or cash and may originate with a third party.
2. Expenditures for former foster children 18 years old up to 21 years old for services such as clothing, transportation, evaluations/therapy and room and board paid with state funds.

I certify that I am authorized to submit CFCIP application for FY 2005 funds in the State of Louisiana.

Application submitted by:

Ann Silverberg Williamson

Name

Secretary, Department of Social Services

Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Approval Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature ACF Regional Administrator or Hub Director

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**STATE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S CERTIFICATIONS  
FOR THE CHAFEE FOSTER CARE INDEPENDENCE PROGRAM**

As Chief Executive Officer of the State of Louisiana, I certify that the State has in effect and is operating a Statewide program relating to Foster Care Independent Living and that the following provisions to effectively implement the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program are in place:

1. The State will provide assistance and services to youth who have left foster care because they have attained 18 years of age, and have not attained 21 years of age [Section 477(b)(3)(A)];
2. Not more than 30 percent of the amounts paid to the State from its allotment for a fiscal year will be expended for room and board for youth who have left foster care because they have attained 18 years of age, and have not attained 21 years of age [Section 477(b)(3)(B)];
3. None of the amounts paid to the State from its allotment will be expended for room or board for any child who has not attained 18 years of age [Section 477(b)(3)(C)];
4. The State will use training funds provided under the program of Federal payments for foster care and adoption assistance to provide training to help foster parents, adoptive parents, workers in group homes, and case managers understand and address the issues confronting adolescents preparing for independent living, and will, to the extent possible, coordinate such training with the independent living program conducted for adolescents [Section 477(b)(3)(D)];
5. The State will adequately prepare prospective foster parents with the appropriate knowledge and skills to provide for the needs of the child before a child, under the supervision of the State, is placed with prospective foster parents and that such preparation will be continued, as necessary, after the placement of the child. [Section 471(a), as amended];
6. The State has consulted widely with public and private organizations in developing the plan and has given all interested members of the public at least 30 days to submit comments on the plan [Section 477(b)(3)(E)];
7. The State will make every effort to coordinate the State programs receiving funds provided from an allotment made to the State under subsection (c) with other Federal and State programs for youth (especially transitional living youth projects funded under part B of title III of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974); abstinence education programs, local housing programs, programs for disabled youth (especially sheltered workshops), and school-to-work programs offered by high schools or local workforce agencies [Section 477(b)(3)(F)];

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**STATE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S CERTIFICATIONS—Continued**

8. Each American Indian tribe in the State has been consulted about the programs to be carried out under the plan; there have been efforts to coordinate the programs with such tribes; and benefits and services available to American Indian youth in the State on the same basis as to other youth in the State [Section 477(b)(3)(G)];
9. Adolescents participating in the program under this section will participate directly in signing their own program activities that prepare them for independent living and the adolescents will be required to accept personal responsibility for living up to their part of the program [Section 477(b)(3)(H)]; and
10. The State has established and will enforce standards and procedures to prevent fraud abuse in the programs carried out under the plan [Section 477(b)(3)(I)].

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Signature of Chief Executive Officer

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Date

STATE OF LOUISIANA

Child and Family Services Plan 2005 - 2009

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**Part II - FY 2005**

**CFCIP ETV Request for Funds**

Federal Funds Requested \$ 400,401.00

State Match Amount \$100,101.00

Sources: State General Funds paid for education and training related costs, such as room and board.

Request for Re-allotted Funds, (if available):

I certify that I am authorized to submit for the State of Louisiana, the FY 2005 application for ETV funds.

Application submitted by:

Ann Silverberg Williamson  
Name

Secretary, Department of Social Services  
Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Approval Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature ACF Regional Administrator

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**STATE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S CERTIFICATION  
for the  
EDUCATION AND TRAINING VOUCHER PROGRAM  
Chafee Foster Care Independence Program**

As Chief Executive Officer of the State of Louisiana, I certify that the State has in effect and is operating a Statewide program relating to Foster Care Independent Living and that the following provisions will be implemented as of September 30, 2003:

1. The State will comply with the conditions specified in subsection 477(i).
2. The State has described methods it will use to:
  - ensure that the total amount of educational assistance to a youth under this and any other Federal assistance program does not exceed the total cost of attendance; and
  - avoid duplication of benefits under this and any other Federal assistance program, as defined in section 477(3)(b)(J).

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Signature of Chief Executive Officer

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Date



**2.10.B Program Report for Federal Fiscal Year 2003  
and Application for Federal Fiscal Year 2005****Accomplishments and Progress**

The State of Louisiana has designed and conducted its programs to achieve the following purposes of [(Section 477(b)(2)(A), Section 477 (a)(1-6), 45 CFR 1355.20]:

- Helping youth make the transition to self-sufficiency;
- Helping youth receive the education, training and services necessary to obtain employment;
- Helping youth prepare for and enter post secondary training and education institutions;
- Providing personal and emotional support to youth through the promotion of interactions with dedicated adults;
- Providing financial, housing, counseling, employment, education and other appropriate support and services to former foster care recipients 18 years and older up to 21 years of age; and,
- Providing vouchers for education and training, including post secondary education to youth who have aged out of foster care.

With Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) funding, the Office of Community Services served eligible youth 15 years old and older up to age 17 who were likely to remain in foster care until age 18 and former foster care recipients in the Young Adult Program who are 18 years up to age 21 and have aged out of foster care. These groups are served regardless of Title IV-E eligibility. A total of 1,089 youth were served by the eleven contract providers located throughout Louisiana during the federal fiscal year 2002-2003.

Youth aging out of foster care served included:

- Youth placed in the custody of the State of Louisiana, adjudicated in need of care or supervision, and for whom payments are being made for their care or supervision either through state or federal funding sources;
- Youth who were in foster care on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday when custody was automatically vacated;
- Youth who are in need of continued assistance to complete an educational or vocational program or obtain employment;
- Youth between the ages of 18 or older up to 21 years old;
- Youth who voluntarily contracted to continue in the Young Adult Program; and,
- Youth who attends college, high school to obtain a high school diploma, GED classes, vocational training or is obtaining employment within three months.

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The CFCIP contractors provided the following services and activities subject to availability of funds:

- Establishment of outreach programs designed to attract individuals who are eligible to participate in the program;
- Assessment of existing programmatic and systemic barriers to the successful transition of a youth into independent living;
- Development with each participant a written transitional independent living plan which is based on an assessment of needs, and which is incorporated into the individual case plan;
- Training in daily living skills such as budgeting, locating and maintaining housing, preventive health activities and career planning;
- Services designed to enable participants to secure a high school diploma, its equivalent, higher educational opportunities and appropriate vocational training and employment;
- Educational/vocational, individual and group counseling;
- Provision of financial, housing, counseling, employment, education and other appropriate support and services to former foster care recipients 18 years and older up to 21 years of age;
- Provision of support services and assistance designed to improve each participant's transition;
- Integration and coordination of services otherwise available to participants and provision of transportation to services when needed;
- Youth Advisory Boards to provide opportunities for Positive Youth Development;
- Specialized training and consultation for foster parents and other child care providers to build skills in working with this specific population of foster children;
- Training of foster care staff on assessment, case planning, and implementation of independent living plans for foster children;
- Provision of a system for tracking expenditures and program outcomes to assure accountability; and,
- Provision of vouchers for education and training, including post secondary education to youth who have aged out of foster care.

The array of services included daily living skills training, which encompasses assistance with budgeting/money management, housing, career planning, employment preparation, education, communication, personal care, human sexuality, consumer awareness, safety, and community resources. Youth participating in the independent living skills program completed an initial assessment of their independent living skills using the Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment. A written individual transitional independent living plan of services was developed based on the initial needs assessment and the plan was incorporated into the case plan for the youth. At the conclusion of the program, youth completed a post-test using the Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment. The assessment allows an individual evaluation of the services provided. to each youth.

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## Child and Family Services Plan 2005 - 2009

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Some CFCIP providers programs specifically focused on the vocational aspects of independent living. Vocational assessment, job preparation, job placement and continuing vocational support services were components of the program. The programs also emphasized the socialization skills necessary to stay employed. Career counseling was provided through individual and group counseling to offer a support system in developing and pursuing career plans. Placement assistance was the final step to guide the individual into activities that will best enhance his or her career goal such as college, employment, or vocational/technical training programs.

CFCIP providers also offered counseling for youth in the program. Counseling on an individual basis and in groups with the young adults was a critical part of the CFCIP programs, and increased the clients' ability to utilize independent living skills taught. CFCIP providers also participated in Family Team Conferences and discharge planning conferences when requested to provide information and assist in the planning for youth.

CFCIP providers offered mentoring services to give youth opportunities for positive role models as part of their CFCIP program in many ways. The staff of the CFCIP providers assumed a mentoring role for youth as they provided services and modeled effective advocacy. Several types of interns from various universities, colleges, hospitals and other institutions work with CFCIP providers. These interns came from psychology, social work, sociology, dietary and nursing fields, and worked one on one with the youth. The interns also provided positive role models for the youth and encouraged leadership among youth.

TANF funds also provided funding in each region for recruitment, training and supervision of Youth In Transition Mentors and a stipend to the Mentors for providing personal and emotional support for youth as they transition to independence.

Some contractors also offered parenting assessments when needed. Group training on parenting was also offered. Using the "Baby Think It Over" computerized babies, youth had the opportunity to be a parent of the computerized infant for an entire weekend to provide youth a realistic look at the responsibilities of being a parent. As a preventative program, some providers utilized the Empathy Belly that simulates the physical effects of pregnancy so youth could experience them.

Some CFCIP providers provided household items, furniture, and personal items for youth in their programs by receiving donations from the community. At the "Hope Chest", the staff collected recycled clothing, household items, furniture and personal items needed by the youth and these items are provided at no cost to the youth.

Integration and coordination of services to youth in Louisiana were maintained by the providers of CFCIP services by their community networking efforts. Information about and referral to any other needed source of community services was an essential component provided by the CFCIP programs.

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Regional Youth Advisory Boards and the State Youth Advisory Boards operated with the assistance of the CFCIP providers. The Youth Advisory Boards presented youth with opportunities for positive role models and leadership training. The Youth Advisory Boards assisted the CFCIP providers in the planning and implementation of the annual Youth Conference and participated in the Office of Community Services' accreditation process with the Council on Accreditation. Youth Advisory Boards continued working on numerous projects such as a handbook for youth coming into care.

Contractors also provided home visits to the living arrangements of the youth in the programs. The home visits also offered unique opportunities to coordinate services with the foster parents to reinforce the independent living skills taught in the programs.

Outreach efforts to attract eligible youth to the CFCIP programs continued to be a key element in the delivery of services. CFCIP providers continued to send flyers to group homes, residential treatment facilities, schools, and other community based sources of possible referrals for eligible youth for CFCIP services. Providers were also given information on how to contact all eligible foster children to individually offer CFCIP services to the youth. CFCIP providers also met with school social workers to help identify foster teens in various schools.

Some CFCIP providers continued to publish a monthly newsletter distributed throughout the region to youth, foster parents, group homes, and foster care workers. This was a valuable outreach tool, and has been a foundation for open communication about the CFCIP program.

Another service component of CFCIP providers' programs included specialized training and consultation for foster parents and other child care providers to build skills in working with this specific population of foster children. CFCIP providers also trained foster care staff on assessment, case planning, and implementation of independent living plans for foster children. Positive Youth Development training was emphasized in the training of these groups. Title IV-E training funds for foster care and adoption assistance was be used to provide Positive Youth Development training to help foster care workers, foster parents, and adoptive parents understand and address issues confronting youth preparing for independent living.

Before the CFCIP legislation in 1999, the Office of Community Services provided services such as, room and board, educational or vocational, clothing and other support services years to former foster care youth ages 18 years up to 21 years old in the Young Adult Program. When a foster child aged out of foster care at age 18, he or she could voluntarily participate in the Young Adult Program in order to continue his or her educational or vocational training. The youth and the Agency signed a contract specifying the services needed, roles and responsibilities of the parties.

A Young Adult Program contract was signed by the participant upon the participant's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, or within six months of becoming 18 years old and the contract specified the services needed, roles and responsibilities of the parties. For youth who participated in the Young A Program and left the Young Adult Program before the age of 21, youth were given the option to return to the program by signing a new contract within six months of leaving the program.

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A continuum of appropriate living arrangements were provided with state funds such as foster family homes, supervised apartments, college dormitories and independent apartment living. CFCIP funds were also utilized to pay for room and board for any youth in the Young Adult Program when the Young Adult Program's budget was depleted.

In the Young Adult Program, room and board included housing, food and other expenses included with rent such as rental deposits, and utilities. In addition to room and board in various living arrangements, youth are provided with clothing, transportation, educational, vocational or employment assistance.

The Office of Community Services provided Medicaid services for youth ages 18 up to the age of 21 in the Young Adult Program and covered any needed medical care not covered by Medicaid or other community resources. OCS staff provided case management services, supervised the living arrangement and coordinated services and support.

In addition to the CFCIP funded services and the state funded services described, the Office of Community Services also received TANF funding for additional services for foster children ages 16 and 17 years old and former foster youth in the Young Adult Program eligible for the Youth In Transition Program. The program received funding for the federal fiscal year 2001- 2002. The program also received funding for the federal fiscal year 2002-2003. The funding ended on September 30, 2003.

The Youth In Transition Program targeted youth transitioning from foster homes, group homes or other child care settings into their own apartments, supervised apartments and college dormitories. Startup costs were provided for youth moving to their own apartments, supervised apartments and college dormitories. Youth moving into their own apartments also received funding for apartment deposits, water deposits, and telephone deposits. LIHEAP funds provided funds for electric or gas deposits. Young Adult Program funds provided monthly living expenses for youth living in apartments or dormitories with state funds. State funds were used for the daily rate for youth living in supervised apartment programs and included their living expenses.

The Office of Community Services continued to partner with Youth Oasis in Baton Rouge in supporting the operation of a transition living program funded under Part B of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 to provide housing and other services to homeless and former foster care youth. This program continued to provide housing and other support services to youth.

The agencies, community groups, businesses, universities, churches, community professionals, and individual supporters of the CFCIP programs throughout the state are too numerous to mention. The community support has increased this year, and continued to be enthusiastic. Local school districts, public libraries, churches and vocational schools continued to donate their facilities for CFCIP classes so the location of the classes can be as convenient as possible for the youth.

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Other examples of community resources that have coordinated with the CFCIP programs are the mental health centers, health departments, hospitals, American Indian tribes, the United Way, Boys and Girls Clubs, Juvenile Courts, Goodwill Industries, National Park Services, IRS, YWCA, Salvation Army, New Orleans Aids Task Force, Planned Parenthood, New Orleans Police Department, Public Libraries, Health Departments, American Red Cross, schools, banks, apartment complexes, tourist commissions, Better Business Bureaus, grocery stores, department stores, food banks, thrift stores, housing authorities, group homes, residential treatment centers and employment offices. Other partnerships included Head Start, Department of Labor, HUD, universities, colleges, vocational schools, Job Corps, and the National Guard Youth Challenge.

The Office of Community Services partnered with the Department of Labor in order to refer former foster children who have attained 18 years of age up to 25 years of age to access Welfare-to-Work Program services, such as job readiness activities, employment, job placement, tutoring, mentoring and support services. By Interagency Agreement, a joint welfare-to-work policy guidance for both departments was issued to eliminate any barriers in the referral of foster children and former foster children for services and to simplify the referral process.

In the Baton Rouge area, the Office of Community Services, the Casey Family Program and the CFCIP provider, Family Services of Greater Baton Rouge, developed a Collaborative Transition Team to coordinate services for youth transitioning from foster care in the Baton Rouge region. The pilot project was funded by the Casey Family Programs to develop a strength based wraparound case management system for foster care youth. The project provided for any services with flexible funding for services needed by youth, which could not be paid by any other state or federal program. The funding for the program ended this year when the Casey Family Program ceased operations in Baton Rouge.

The Office of Community Services has coordinated with other State agencies, such as the Department of Health and Hospitals, Office of Citizens with Developmental Disabilities and Bureau of Community Supports and Services to identify foster children and former foster children who may be eligible for services for mentally retarded or developmentally delayed youth. The coordination has resulted in access to federally funded Medicaid Waiver services and other community based services. Interagency staffing was the mechanism used to coordinate and access services from these agencies.

Likewise, the Agency has coordinated with the Department of Health and Hospitals, Office of Mental Health and Office of Addictive Disorders to identify foster children and former foster children who may be eligible for federally funded services such as community outpatient, inpatient, and Mental Health Rehabilitation Option services. Interagency staffing was the mechanism used to coordinate and access services from these agencies CFCIP providers continued to coordinate with transitional living programs and various housing alternatives to explore new ways to meet the housing needs of the independent living participants. Additionally, coordination with local parish housing authorities has continued. Moreover, additional vocational options and resources have been identified so independent living participants can be referred for services.

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The Louisiana Coalition of Independent Living Skills Providers continues to be composed of the Office of Community Services' CFCIP State Child Welfare Specialist and representatives of CFCIP providers. The Coalition met quarterly as a forum to exchange information on quality service delivery and provide training to the participants. Additional purposes were to define barriers and problems and develop a unified approach to solving problems common to all members.

### **Data On Youth Eligible And Youth Served**

The Office of Community Services has continued to offer CFCIP services during the 2002- 2003 fiscal year to foster children from 15 to 18 years old and former foster youth, who were no longer in the custody of the state of Louisiana and are between the ages of 18-21 years. During some part or all of the fiscal year (October 1, 2002 through September 30, 2003), there were 2,543 foster care children and young adult clients who were age eligible for CFCIP services.

There were 136 fifteen year old youth, 1,041 sixteen year old clients, 534 seventeen year old youth, 584 eighteen year old clients, 146 nineteen year old youth, and 102 twenty year old clients. There were 1,330 females and 1,213 males eligible for services.

The majority of the eligible population was black numbering 1,572. The white eligible clients totaled 935. There were nine Asian clients, ten American Indians and six clients in the category of other ethnicity and 11 were unknown.

The majority of the eligible youth, 952 resided in foster homes, and 304 resided in group homes. The eligible youth living independently was 336. The number of eligible clients residing in institutional settings, such as residential facilities, psychiatric hospitals, medical facilities was 676. Finally, the number of clients residing in the category of other type of placements was 152. Data was not available on 123 clients.

The data revealed that 2,004 youth had no disabilities. There were 35 youth with physical disabilities, 174 youth with disabilities of mental illness, 326 youth with developmental disabilities, and four youth with other types of disabilities.

The eligible clients who were single numbered 2,390. The status of 146 youth were unknown. Six eligible youth reported that they were married and one reported as divorced. The data indicated that 13 youth were parents themselves.

There were 279 youth in care for less than six months. There were 404 clients in foster care for between six months but less than one year. The largest group numbered 674 was youth in care between one but less than two years. Another group of 361 was in foster care two years but less than three years. The number of youth in care three years but less than four years was 179. The remaining youth were in care for the following time periods: 87 for four years but less than five years, 138 for five years but less than seven years, 196 for seven years but less than ten years, 86 for ten years but less than twelve years, 74 for twelve years but less than fifteen years, and 46 for fifteen years or more. Data was not known on 19 youth.

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In the 2002-2003 fiscal year, there were 1,089 clients served by the CFCIP programs. A detailed description of the specific characteristics of the population receiving services as of September 30, 2003 was tabulated. There were 136 fifteen year old youth, 334 sixteen year old participants, and 350 seventeen year old clients. The eighteen year old youth numbered 261, and the number of nineteen year old participants was eight. There were no clients served in the twenty years old category. Services were provided to 536 males, and 553 females during this period.

The majority of clients served were black clients numbering 695, while there were 379 white clients served. Three Asian, and three American Indian were served. The race/ethnicity of nine youth was not known.

There were 267 of the clients residing in foster homes, and 298 residing in group homes. The participating youth living independently was 66. The number of participating clients residing in institutional settings, such as residential facilities, psychiatric hospitals, medical facilities, was 339. Clients numbering 72 were in the other category. The living arrangements of 47 participants were unknown.

The data revealed that 811 youth did not have any known disabilities. There were 13 youth with physical disabilities, 71 youth with disabilities of mental illness, and 194 youth with developmental disabilities.

Of the youth served 1,040 were unmarried. One client was married and the status of 48 were unknown. The number of clients who were parents was 13.

There were 33 youth in foster care for less than six months. There were 179 clients in foster care for between six month but less than one year. The largest group numbering 320 was youth in care between one but less than two years. Another group of 195 was in foster care between two but less than three years. The number of youth in care between three years but less than four years was 67. The remaining youth were in care for the following time: 39 for four years but less than five years, 67 for five years but less than seven years, 83 for seven but less than ten years, 42 for ten years but less than twelve years, 32 for twelve years but less than fifteen years, and 13 for over fifteen years. Data was not available on 19 youth.

Continuing the agency's efforts to assess the CFCIP providers' individual program performance, and meet state and federal requirements, the Office of Community Services again used the Independent Living Skills Program Monitoring Instrument in their program review of each provider of CFCIP services.

The in-depth review of each program included a review of the program, management and direct care staff, reviews of financial, and client records. The programs were reviewed to determine compliance with federal and state standards, service planning and service delivery including an examination of individual client records, staffing issues, record keeping, and fiscal operations.



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**Outcomes of Chafee Foster Care Independence Program**

An assessment of independent living services was obtained by using an objective measure of the services, the Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment. This assessment was given to the youth before they attended the independent living programs to obtain baseline data on their knowledge and again after they had completed the independent living skills programs.

The average percent of increase after the classes for the participants' Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment score was 70%. The percentage increase in the test scores seems to indicate that the participants are learning and retaining the independent living skills taught in the classes. A second way used to measure the outcomes of the CFCIP programs was the follow-up surveys administered to the clients after they successfully finished the independent living program. This data was collected again this year using the same instrument as last year.

The number of youth completing the independent living skills program was 341. Follow-up surveys were obtained from 206 clients, who could be located. The data revealed that there were six fifteen year old clients, 50 sixteen year old clients, 80 seventeen year old participants, 50 eighteen year old youth, 15 nineteen year old clients and 5 twenty year old participants surveyed using the follow-up instrument.

There were 106 male clients and 100 female clients completing the program. The racial composition of the group included 133 black youth, 70 white youth, two American Indians and one bi-racial (black/white)youth.

There were 203 were unmarried youth, two married and one youth did not provide the information. A majority of the youth, 175 youth were not parents. However, 16 youth had children, and 11 were pregnant. Four youth did not provide the information. Presently, 105 of the youth were not yet 18 years old and still in the Office of Community Services custody and 56 were in custody of the Office of Youth Development. Twenty-six youth were in the Young Adult Program. Seventeen youth were not participating in the Young Adult Program. The status of two youth was unknown.

Of the 206 youth, 83 stated that they would contract to continue in the Young Adult Program. Of the youth indicating they would participate in YAP, a majority said that they would participate for the maximum time period of three years.

A significant finding of the survey is that 154 of the 206 clients or 75% are presently continuing in some type of educational or vocational program. Eleven youth were not in an educational program. Of the clients continuing their training, there were 108 youth attending a regular school program and 24 were attending adult education/GED classes. Sixteen clients were attending special education programs. Six young adults were attending college. Twenty youth reported earning a high school diploma and seven reported earning a GED. Three youth had completed a vocational program and two youth had completed special education programs. Sixteen youth did not provide the information. These findings are very encouraging results

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because educational or vocational training has been shown to be an excellent predictor of how independently youth will be able to function as adults.

Of the 206 youth, 163 youth also indicated that when they left foster, the Young Adult Program or the Office of Youth Development that they would continue their education. Thirty-six youth would continue high school, 38 would attend GED, two would attend special education, 64 would attend college, 19 would attend vocational training and four youth would attend other types of educational programs. Forty-three youth did not respond to the question.

Since most of the young adults surveyed were attending an educational or vocational program, the number of survey participants working full time was 15 and 28 clients were employed part-time.

The youth remaining in foster care or the Young Adult Program continued to live in supervised living arrangements such as foster care homes, in relatives homes, supervised apartments, or group homes. A positive result was 35 youth were living in their own apartments or sharing apartments. Four youth were living in college dormitories. Additionally, 50 youth were living with relatives and 34 were living with former foster parents. Sixteen youth were living in foster homes. Forty-five youth were living in group homes. One youth was in the Job Corps. Three youth were living in other types of living arrangements. None of the youth were presently homeless. However, eight youth reported being homeless for a brief time. The living arrangements of 18 youth were unknown. The independent living skills learned in the program may have contributed to the young adults' ability to successfully maintain themselves in appropriate living arrangements and prevent the homelessness cycle from starting.

Only six of the youth were receiving TANF assistance and six were receiving food stamps. Thirteen clients were receiving SSI benefits and thirteen were receiving Social Security benefits. One client was receiving Section 8 housing. One hundred youth were receiving Medicaid. Six youth were receiving assistance from their families.

The follow-up survey also inquired about community services that clients might be receiving. Twenty-seven youth were receiving educational grants. Twenty-five participants were receiving mental health services and eight youth were receiving substance abuse services.

Twenty youth were participating in family planning services. Nine youth were participating in Vocational Rehabilitation services. One youth was receiving Waiver services for the developmentally disabled.

Of the participants surveyed, a vast majority of the youth had very positive comments when asked their opinion about the independent living skill services they had received. Most frequently mentioned comments were how good the participants thought the services were and how helpful they considered the services. Of 206 youth surveyed, 172 had positive comments, 31 youth did not comment and three youths did not like the services.

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When asked what part of CFCIP services was most helpful to the participant, the area of training listed most frequently was money management, then sex education information, employment and educational information. Many participants said all areas of the training were helpful and the training had given them a more realistic picture of living on their own.

Youth completing the basic independent living skills program have demonstrated on an objective instrument that they have increased their independent living skills. The survey of clients finishing the independent living skills program has shown that majority of youth have continued in an educational or vocational program and have not dropped out of school. The independent living skills program did focus on education and vocational goals and may have contributed to the participants' decision to continue in educational or vocational training. Additionally, the survey of participants indicated that the youth had appropriate living arrangements.

Many young adults completing the independent living training classes stayed in contact with the provider of the service indicating that beneficial supportive relationships have been established with the clients. Therefore, these programs are having positive benefits on the youth in other areas in addition to teaching concrete independent living skills. Moreover, it appears that aftercare services provided by the CFCIP providers are supportive to the youth in handling emotional crises, which may occur while transitioning into independence after leaving foster care.

The CFCIP Program in Louisiana continued to have a positive impact on transitioning youth to self-sufficiency. The program has provided services to help youth receive education, training and other services to obtain employment in the future or post secondary training or education, and personal and emotional support for youth with positive relationships with adults and mentors, financial, housing, counseling, employment, educational and other services were provided to former foster care youth ages 18 year old up to 21 years old to assist them in achieving their educational or vocational goals. The Office of Community Services continued to coordinate the funding from various state and federal programs to offer the needed services to the maximum number of eligible youth.

### **Training Fiscal Year 2003**

The state-wide Youth Independent Living Conference was held at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana on June 9-11, 2003. The university setting allowed participants an opportunity to experience being on a university campus. The conference was hosted by the CFCIP provider, Family Service of Greater Baton Rouge. The Youth Advisory Board assisted in planning the conference, selecting the speakers and making the conference a success. The conference included educational speakers, a dance and a picnic. Youth also had the opportunity to obtain information on admission to universities and colleges in Louisiana and information on employment opportunities. The conference had over 100 participants and the costs were paid with CFCIP funds.

On June 25, 2003, Catholic Charities CFCIP provided an Advanced Life Skills Conference for youth in New Orleans with employment options presented by representatives from local

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businesses and educational opportunities presented by guest speakers from educational and vocational institutions.

The CFCIP Program Manager provided training to the youth in the greater New Orleans area on CFCIP, the Young Adult Program, and the Youth In Transition Program on November 24, 2003.

The CFCIP Program Manager provided training to the OCS staff state wide on the CFCIP, the Young Adult Program, and the Youth In Transition Program on July 24, 2003.

The Casey Family Program has promoted the development of advocacy skills for youth, families and professionals to work for positive change in our child care systems by hosting the NOW! Conference in New Orleans on October 18, 2002. Over 200 foster care youth and child welfare staff participated. The primary themes of the conference were the Integrated Transition Practice Framework, Wraparound positive youth planning process and youth engagement/advocacy.

The Office of Community Services continues to emphasize educational opportunities for the CFCIP State Program Manager and CFCIP Providers to improve the quality and effectiveness of CFCIP services. The CFCIP Child Welfare Specialist and some CFCIP providers attended the Pathways to Adulthood Conference in Chicago, Illinois on April 23 - 25, The CFCIP Child Welfare Specialist and CFCIP providers attended the National Independent Living Association and Daniel's Growing Pains in Orlando, Florida on August 14-16, 2003. This conference was an excellent opportunity for providers of CFCIP services and transitional living services to network and coordinate.

CFCIP providers provided specialized training and consultation for foster parents and other child care providers to build skills in working with this specific population of foster children. CFCIP providers also trained foster care staff on assessment, case planning, and implementation of independent living plans for foster children.

### **Training Planned for Fiscal Year 2004**

The Statewide Youth Independent Living Conference will be held in Baton Rouge at Louisiana State University in June, 2004 sponsored by OCS and the CFCIP providers. Youth on the Youth Advisory Boards will be active in planning the conference activities and speakers.

An Advanced Life Skills Conference for youth in New Orleans will be held in June, 2004 with employment options presented by representatives from local businesses on one day and educational opportunities presented on the second day with guest speakers from educational and vocational institutions.

The CFCIP providers will be training OCS staff and foster parents in all regions of the State on Positive Youth Development in during the year. This training will be funded with Title IV-E funding.

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The CFCIP Program Manager and some CFCIP Providers will attend the Pathways to Adulthood National Conference for Transitional Living/Independent Living in 2004 and the Daniel /NILA "Growing Pains 2004".

CFCIP providers will continue to provide specialized training and consultation for foster parents and other child care providers to build skills in working with this specific population of foster children during the year. CFCIP providers also train foster care staff on assessment, case planning, and implementation of independent living plans for foster children during the year.

The CFCIP Child Welfare Specialist and/ or the OCS Training Staff will present training for OCS staff as needed to update staff on any policy changes in the CFCIP, the Young Adult Program and the Education and Training Vouchers Program. The CFCIP Child Welfare Specialist and CFCIP providers will provide training to the youth on any changes in program policy during the year.

### **Services Available to American Indians**

In Louisiana, American Indian children needing foster care are in the custody of the Office of Community Services. The Tribes do not have a separate foster care system. American Indian children in foster care are eligible for and received the same foster care services as other children in care. Any American Indian foster child of the appropriate age group is eligible for any needed services from the CFCIP, Education and Training Vouchers and Young Adult Program.

### **Request for Fiscal Year 2005 Funds**

The request for federal fiscal year 2005 for \$1,358,131.00 is in CFS-101 which is attached. The eligible population is expected to be approximately 2,500 in fiscal year 2005. The estimated number of eligible youth to be served is 1,100. The estimated number of youth 15 to 17 years old to be served will be 950 and youth 18 years up to 21 to be served will be 150.

**2.10.C CFCIP Education and Training Vouchers Providers**

REGION I (Orleans) AND REGION X (Jefferson)

**Catholic Charities Archdiocese of N.O.**

Independent Living Program

1101 Barataria Blvd.

Marrero, LA 70072

Judy Potter, Program Director

Melisa Jack, Service Coordinator

DaLanie Banks, ETV Coordinator

Valerie Swayne, Life Skills Counselor

Eteldridge Sanders, Life Skills Counselor

PHONE: (504) 340-5100

FAX: (504) 347-0095

E-MAIL: [judyilsp@archdiocese-no.org](mailto:judyilsp@archdiocese-no.org)

REGION I (Orleans), REGION IX (Covington) AND REGION X (Jefferson)

**Family Service of Greater New Orleans**

2515 Canal St., Suite 201

New Orleans, LA 70119

Independent Living Program

Rene' Bonds, Administrator

Angie Smith, Supervisor and ETV Coordinator

Dennell Brown, ILS Case Manager

Monic Gray, ILS Case Manager

(PHONE: (504) 822-0800

FAX: (504) 822-0831

EMAIL: [rbonds@mail.fsgno.org](mailto:rbonds@mail.fsgno.org)

[asmith@mail.fsgno.org](mailto:asmith@mail.fsgno.org)

[dbrown@mail.fsgno.org](mailto:dbrown@mail.fsgno.org)

[mgray@mail.fsgno.org](mailto:mgray@mail.fsgno.org)

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REGION II (Baton Rouge)

**Family Service of Greater Baton Rouge**

4845 Jamestown Ave, Suite 101

Baton Rouge, LA 70808

Independent Living Program

Elaine McClay, Program Manager

Sharon Marshall-Jefferson, ETV Coordinator

Diane Swayzer Smith, Independent Living Specialist

PHONE: (225) 923-2399

Fax: (225) 923-0234

E-MAIL: [elainemcclay@yahoo.com](mailto:elainemcclay@yahoo.com) [sjmentoring@aol.com](mailto:sjmentoring@aol.com) (Sharon Jefferson)

REGION III (Thibodaux)

**Gulf Coast Teaching Family Services Inc.**

Independent Living Program

154 North Hollywood Blvd.

Houma, LA 70364

Stephanie Ward, Program Director, ETV Coordinator

PHONE: (985) 851-4487

1-800-947-7645

FAX: (985) 872-0985

E-MAIL: [WardStep4@netscape.net](mailto:WardStep4@netscape.net)

Stephanie cell: 985-790-5393

Stephanie pager: 985-853-4020

REGION IV (Lafayette)

**Gulf Coast Teaching Family Services, Inc.**

Independent Living Program

515 South College Road, Suite 260

Lafayette, LA 70503

Rick Dawes, Program Director (ext. 34)

Lee Armelin ILP Coordinator (ext. 37)

Amie Bordelon ETV Coordinator (ext. 33)

PHONE: (337) 269-1165

1-800-285-8123

FAX: (337) 235-1961

E-MAIL: [ilp@gctfs.org](mailto:ilp@gctfs.org) (Rick Dawes)

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REGION V (Lake Charles)

**Youth Services of Southwest Louisiana**

2000 Southwood Drive

Lake Charles, LA 70605

Independent Living Program

Brenda LaFleur , Director, ETV Coordinator

PHONE: (337) 474-2682

FAX: (337) 474-4601

E-MAIL: [youthservices@bellsouth.com](mailto:youthservices@bellsouth.com)

REGION VI (Alexandria)

**Family Counseling Agency, Inc.**

P.O. Box 1908

Alexandria, LA 71309

Independent Living Program

Henry Marsland, IL Coordinator

Cell: 318-729-3707 Pager (Toll free): 1-877-682-6822-Box 13497

Wilma Marler, ETV Coordinator

PHONE: (318) 448-0284

1-800-960-9436

FAX: (318) 448-0280

E-MAIL: [Famcounsel@aol.com](mailto:Famcounsel@aol.com)

REGION VII (Shreveport) and REGION VIII (Monroe)

**Methodist Children's Home**

P. O. Box 929

Ruston, LA 71273-0929

Independent Living Program

Angie Thomas, ETV Coordinator

318-255-3717

Velissa Rollins, Life Skills Specialist

318-242-4687

Amber Stevens, Life Skills Specialist

PHONE: (318) 255-3717- LS Main

(318) 255-5020-MCH main campus office

FAX: (318) 513-2096

(318) 255-6623

E-MAIL: [angie.thomas@lmch.org](mailto:angie.thomas@lmch.org)

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**2.10.D CFCIP Independent Living Skills Provider**

REGION I (Orleans) AND REGION X (Jefferson)

**Catholic Charities Archdiocese of N.O.**

Independent Living Program

1101 Barataria Blvd.

Marrero, LA 70072

Judy Potter, Program Director

Melisa Jack, Service Coordinator

DaLanie Banks, ETV Coordinator

Valerie Swayne, Life Skills Counselor

Eteldridge Sanders, Life Skills Counselor

PHONE: (504) 340-5100

FAX: (504) 347-0095

E-MAIL: [judyilsp@archdiocese-no.org](mailto:judyilsp@archdiocese-no.org) (Judy Potter)

REGION I (Orleans), REGION IX (Covington) AND REGION X (Jefferson)

**Family Service of Greater New Orleans**

2515 Canal St., Suite 201

New Orleans, LA 70119

Independent Living Program

Rene' Bonds, Administrator

Angie Smith, Supervisor and ETV Coordinator

Dennell Brown, ILS Case Manager

Monic Gray, ILS Case Manager

(PHONE: (504) 822-0800

FAX: (504) 822-0831

EMAIL: [rbonds@mail.fsgno.org](mailto:rbonds@mail.fsgno.org)

[asmith@mail.fsgno.org](mailto:asmith@mail.fsgno.org)

[dbrown@mail.fsgno.org](mailto:dbrown@mail.fsgno.org)

[mgray@mail.fsgno.org](mailto:mgray@mail.fsgno.org)

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REGION II (Baton Rouge)

**Family Service of Greater Baton Rouge**

4845 Jamestown Ave, Suite 101  
Baton Rouge, LA 70808  
Independent Living Program  
Elaine McClay, Program Manager  
Sharon Marshall-Jefferson, ETV Coordinator  
Diane Swayzer Smith, Independent Living Specialist

PHONE: (225) 923-2399  
Fax: (225) 923-0234  
E-MAIL: [elainemcclay@yahoo.com](mailto:elainemcclay@yahoo.com)  
Sharon: [sjmentoring@aol.com](mailto:sjmentoring@aol.com)

REGION III (Thibodaux)

**Gulf Coast Teaching Family Services Inc.**

Independent Living Program  
154 North Hollywood Blvd.  
Houma, LA 70364  
Stephanie Ward, Program Director, ETV Coordinator  
PHONE: (985) 851-4487  
1-800-947-7645  
FAX: (985) 872-0985  
E-MAIL: [WardStep4@netscape.net](mailto:WardStep4@netscape.net)  
Stephanie cell: 985-790-5393  
Stephanie pager: 985-853-4020

REGION IV (Lafayette)

**Gulf Coast Teaching Family Services, Inc.**

Independent Living Program  
515 South College Road, Suite 260  
Lafayette, LA 70503  
Rick Dawes, Program Director (ext. 34)  
Lee Armelin ILP Coordinator (ext. 37)  
Amie Bordelon ETV Coordinator (ext. 33)  
PHONE: (337) 269-1165  
1-800-285-8123  
FAX: (337) 235-1961  
E-MAIL: [ilp@gctfs.org](mailto:ilp@gctfs.org) (Rick Dawes)

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### REGION V (Lake Charles)

#### **Youth Services of Southwest Louisiana**

2000 Southwood Drive

Lake Charles, LA 70605

Independent Living Program

Brenda LaFleur , Director, ETV Coordinator

PHONE: (337)474-2682

FAX: (337)474-4601

E-MAIL: [youthservices@bellsouth.com](mailto:youthservices@bellsouth.com) (Brenda LaFleur)

### REGION VI (Alexandria)

#### **Family Counseling Agency, Inc.**

P.O. Box 1908

Alexandria, LA 71309

Independent Living Program

Henry Marsland, IL Coordinator

Cell: 318-729-3707 Pager(Toll free): 1-877-682-6822-Box 13497

Wilma Marler, ETV Coordinator

PHONE: (318) 448-0284

1-800-960-9436

FAX: (318) 448-0280

E-MAIL: [Famcounsel@aol.com](mailto:Famcounsel@aol.com) (Henry Marsland)

### REGION VII (Shreveport)

#### **Mental Health Solutions**

2835 Hollywood Ave. 71108

P.O. Box 8580

Shreveport, LA 71148

Sallie Anderson, IL Director

PHONE: (318) 631-1122 ext.18

FAX: (318) 631-1166

E-MAIL: [sallieil@bellsouth.net](mailto:sallieil@bellsouth.net) (Sallie Anderson)

### REGION VII (Shreveport)

#### **Rutherford House**

1707 Line Avenue

Shreveport, LA 71101-4670

Kathy Elias, IL Coordinator

PHONE: (318) 222-9371

(318) 222-0222

(318) 221-2934

FAX: (318) 222-0385

E-MAIL: [jag@shreve.net](mailto:jag@shreve.net) (Kathy Elias)

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### REGION VIII (Monroe)

#### **Methodist Children's Home**

P. O. Box 929

Ruston, LA 71273-0929

Independent Living Program

Angie Thomas, ETV Coordinator

318-255-3717

Velissa Rollins, Life Skills Specialist

318-242-4687

Amber Stevens, Life Skills Specialist

PHONE: (318) 255-3717- LS Main

(318) 255-5020-MCH main campus office

FAX: (318) 513-2096

(318) 255-6623

E-MAIL: [angie.thomas@lmch.org](mailto:angie.thomas@lmch.org) (Angie Thomas)

[velissa.rollins@lmch.org](mailto:velissa.rollins@lmch.org) (Velissa Rollins)

[amber.stevens@lmch.org](mailto:amber.stevens@lmch.org) (Amber Stevens)

### OCS CFCIP STAFF

#### **Louisiana Office of Community Services**

1010 Common St, 14th Floor

New Orleans, LA 70112

P.O. Box 57149, New Orleans, La 70157

Betty Becker, Program Manager

PHONE: (504) 568-8003

FAX: (504) 568-7491

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#### **Louisiana Office of Community Services**

P.O. Box 3318

Baton Rouge, LA 70821

Gwendolyn Green, Secretary for CFCIP

PHONE: (225) 342-4029

FAX: (225) 342-9087

E-MAIL: [ggreen@dss.state.la.us](mailto:ggreen@dss.state.la.us)

**2.11 Promoting Safe and Stable Families**

Legal Reference 42 USC629 45 CFR 1357.15 (a)(1)(ii)
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The primary focus of promoting Safe and Stable Families is on four areas of service: family support services, family preservation services, time-limited family reunification services, and adoption promotion and support services to children and families. The Agency assures that significant portions of expenditures will be made in these four areas and is proposing to use the following percentages for Title IV-B, Part 2 funding:

- 22.5% for Prevention and Support Services
- 22.5% for Crisis Intervention
- 22.5% for Time Limited Reunification Services
- 22.5% for Adoption Promotion and support Services

These estimated expenditures are consistent with present expenditures and allow for administrative functions to be fulfilled.

Estimated expenditures for the services described above (amounts are in thousands):

<u>Service</u>	<u>Estimated Expenditures</u>
Prevention and Support Services	\$ 2,860
Crisis Intervention – Preplacement Prevention	\$ 1,430
Reunification Services	\$ 1,430
Time-Limited Family Reunification Services	\$ 2,859
Adoption Promotion and Support Services	\$ 2,859
Administration & Management	\$ 1,118
Staff Training	\$ 153
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$12,709</b>

Services to promote safe and stable families include the following:

**A. Infant Team Assessment Model**

- Services provided in Jefferson and Orleans Parishes.
- Serves foster children, birth to 47 months.
- Provides one year of specialized assessments and intervention services.
- Makes recommendations to inform case planning.

B. Family Resource Centers

**1. Foster and Adoptive Family Resource Centers**

- Eleven centers located statewide.
- Serves families with adopted children or children in foster care, (state agency placements and/or private agency placements).

**2. Child Welfare Family Resource Centers**

- Nineteen centers statewide.
- Referrals accepted from Families in Need of Services (FINS), Child Protection Investigations (CPI), Family Services (FS), and Foster Care (FC).

**3. Family Resource Center Services (List not all inclusive)**

- Respite (crisis and planned)
- Supervised Family Visits
- Information, Referral and Advocacy
- Parenting Classes
- Psychotherapy (limited intensive home based services)
- Support Groups
- Training

**4. Internet Data Base for Family Resource Centers**

- Developed through contract and use of Microsoft technology.
- Statewide security system.
- Process involves provider data collection and compilation.
- Focus is on understanding service impact and improving the safety, permanency and well being of families and children.
- Allows OCS and providers access to data to report on findings, issue and analyze reports (e.g. referrals, demographics, service usage and outcomes), and make data driven adjustments to improve service delivery.

**5. Evaluation of Family Resource Centers**

- Evaluates achievement of outcomes via Internet database
- Identifies gaps and trends in service delivery

**C. Collaboration with Substance Abuse Service Providers**

- Improves the quality of the substance abuse services for child welfare clients.
- Recognizes that substance abuse is at the core of the majority of child welfare family problems.
- Works diligently to eliminate barriers for OCS clients at substance abuse clinics.
- Explores funding to develop innovative programs (ex. outreach worker).
- Enhances service delivery and coordination between the agencies statewide.

**D. Preventive Assistance Funds (PAF) and Reunification Assistance Funds (RAF)**

- Provides financial assistance for the purchase of items and services that may lead to reunification and/or stabilization of the home.

**E. Foster and Adoptive Home Training and Certification**

- Involves contracts with private providers.
- Assists with a rapid response to increased interest in fostering/adopting.
- Assists with initial screening, pre-service training, and preliminary assessment.

**F. Adoption Recruitment Services**

- Involves the purchase of videotaping services of children free for adoption.
- Utilized for specialized recruitment.

**G. Healthy Start Services**

- Operated by Project Hope of the North Louisiana Area Health Education Center, (Monroe Region).
- Utilizes the Healthy Families America Model.
- Covers some costs of a family assessment worker.
- Provides free, voluntary intensive home visitation and assessment services to first time mothers in Ouachita Parish.
- Targets new mothers at risk for child abuse and/or neglect due to lack of parenting knowledge and family stress factors.

**H. Protective Day Care Services**

**I. Safety Assessment and Planning, Risk Assessment, Placement and Removal**

- Includes referral to the Family Services Program or other appropriate agencies.

**J. Louisiana Advocacy Support Team (LAST)**

- Endorsed and funded by OCS through the Louisiana Foster and Adoptive Parent Association.
- Volunteers trained by American Foster Care Resources.
- Volunteers are foster parents helping foster parents deal with allegations of abuse and neglect.
- Provides support services to foster and adoptive parents via seven Foster and Adoptive Family Resource Centers.
- Provides on-site consultation in the Monroe Region family resource center and a toll-free number.

**K. Contracts for Legal Work**

- Assists in reducing TPR backlog.

**L. Litigation Costs**

- Compensates attorneys providing representation in child protection proceedings.
- Provides an opportunity to control costs and encourage specialized representation on behalf of children.

**M. Post-Adoption Services**

- In home case management services offered through family resource centers and regional contracts with individual providers.
- Services provided up to 18 months following adoption finalization.
- Assists parents in working on subsidy matters, school board issues, counseling, or other services.
- Crisis Intervention Services provided through Foster and Adoptive Family Resource Centers when the placement is at risk of disruption.

**N. Community Collaboration**

- Focus is on establishing enhanced coordination, collaboration, and planning for parishes statewide.

**2.11.A Healthy Marriage/Relationship Strengthening Initiative**

- Project to provide Family Resource Centers (centers) the opportunity to add a healthy marriage/strengthening relationship component to their menu of services
- Thirty centers expected to participate
- Discovery Family Resource Center to be the lead center in project implementation
- Targeted to families served by OCS and Families In Need of Services



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- 1,080 families statewide are expected to be positively affected
- Center and OCS staff to be trained on the use of the PREP curriculum
- The project goal is to increase the center's effectiveness in helping foster and adoptive parents and adults in fragile families strengthen their significant relationships, resulting in safer home environments for their children.
- Data to be collected/analyzed to assess performance outcomes using control groups (participant services received in group settings as opposed to services received individually in the home and participants using supplemental knapsack materials as compared to those using only Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program [PREP] materials)
- Southeastern Louisiana University's Sponsored Research Program to conduct project evaluation
  - **Primary Interventions for the Healthy Marriage "Knapsack" Project include:**
    1. Use of the Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP)
    2. Use of "Knapsack," a collection of supplemental information and interventions used in the home
    3. Utilization of current resources developed by other community-based providers for the Knapsacks

### **2.11.B Fatherhood Initiative**

- Use of IV-E funds to educate agency staff and providers regarding the role of fathers in the child welfare experience
- Utilization of services provided by community-based organizations

### **2.11.C Faith-Based Initiative**

The Agency is working with Reverend W.C. Martin on implementation of a faith-based recruitment initiative. To date, the faith-based functions have been held in Covington, Alexandria, and Shreveport Regions. While the total number attending those functions have fallen short of the number of persons invited, we are optimistic that the clergy that attended those functions will highlight the needs of our agency and partnership with us to recruit families for our children who are in need of homes. Faith-based functions have been in the form of prayer breakfasts, brunches, and a dinner. Clergy and interested stakeholders are given a form to complete which highlights areas where they would like to assist OCS in finding homes for children.

The availability of the training/technical assistance days through the Federally contracted National Child Welfare Resource Centers facilitated and accommodated the presentations by Bishop Aaron Blake and Michael Redden in Alexandria and Shreveport. Specifically, the

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National Child Welfare Resource Center for Special Needs Adoption was utilized for this purpose. OCS was also involved in planning for and participation in the “Faith-Based Recruitment/Retention of Adoptive Parents” event in Shreveport, LA, on September 1-2, 2004.

The following is a breakdown of attendance at the function:

- Covington Region – April 20, 2004  
Total in attendance – 66  
Staff – 38  
Pastors/Ministerial Representatives – 19  
Foster Parents – 9
  
- Alexandria Region – April 22, 2004  
Total in attendance – 77  
Staff – 28  
Pastors/Ministerial Representatives – 21  
Others – 28
  
- Shreveport Region – September 1 – 2, 2004  
Total in attendance – 52  
Staff – 33  
Pastors/Ministerial Representatives – 15  
Foster Parents – 4
  
- Jefferson Region – July 9, 2004  
Total in attendance – 35  
Staff – 21  
Pastors/Ministerial Representatives – 12  
Others – 2
  
- Orleans Region – July 23, 2004  
Total in attendance – 50  
Staff – 28  
Pastors/Ministerial Representatives – 20  
Others – 11

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- Baton Rouge Region – June 23, 2004  
  
Total in attendance – 68  
Staff – 28  
Pastors/Ministerial Representatives – 32  
Foster Parents – 4  
Others – 4
  
- Lafayette Region – June 22, 2004  
  
Total in attendance – 72  
Staff – 52  
Pastors/Ministerial Representatives – 4  
Foster Parents – 16
  
- Monroe Region – June 25, 2004  
  
Total in attendance – 68  
Staff – 24  
Pastors/Ministerial Representatives – 36  
Foster/Adoptive Parents – 8
  
- Lake Charles Region – July 20, 2004  
  
Total in attendance - 48  
Staff – 20  
Pastors/Ministerial Representatives – 24  
Others – 4

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## **2.12 Indian Child Welfare Act and Tribal Coordination**

**Legal Reference**

42 USC622(b)  
45 CFR1357.15(d)(1)  
45 CFR1357.15(1)(3)(r)  
P.L. 103-432

Louisiana has four federally recognized Indian (American Indian) tribes. The American Indian population of these tribes is 0.57% of the total population of Louisiana.

### **Federal Tribes**

COA  
G2.2

Chitimacha Tribe  
(St. Mary Parish)  
P.O. Box 661  
Charenton, LA 70523  
(337) 923-7215  
Al Leblanc, Chairman

Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana  
(Allen Parish)  
P.O. Box 968  
Elton, LA 70532  
(337) 584-2261  
Lovelin Poncho, Chairman

Tunica-Biloxi Tribe  
(Avoyelles Parish)  
P.O. Box 331  
Marksville, LA 71351  
(318) 253-9767  
Earl Barbry, Chairman

Jena Band of Choctaw  
(Grant, Rapides, & Lasalle Parishes)  
P.O. Box 14  
Jena, LA 71342  
(318) 992-2717  
Christine Norris, Chairman

### **Specific Measures/Plans to Comply with Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)**

- Agency program policy governing case planning and service delivery will be updated as needed.
- The Agency will continue to protect the cultural heritage and best interest of American Indians through its policy and practices.
- Specific policies of the Foster Care program address child custody proceedings in the following ways: family preservation and family support services; tribal notifications when a child enters the state system; tribal jurisdiction, foster care placement, termination of parental rights, pre-adoptive placement and adoptive place.
- The Agency has incorporated the exclusive rights of American Indian tribes on notification of placement, and adoption issues into the training curriculum.

**On-Going Collaboration/Coordination with American Indian Tribes**

- The Agency has entered into one formal working agreement with one of the four federally recognized tribes. The agreement with the Tunica-Biloxi tribe provides that all investigations are discussed with the social service director of the tribe. Louisiana tribes have no foster care social service programs.
- While there are no formal agreements with the other tribes, there are informal working agreements. The Jena Band of Choctaws, for example, makes reports to the Agency when they have concerns about tribal members. Also, the Chitimacha tribe conducts its own investigation on the reservation while off the reservation the Agency conducts the investigations.
- The Agency has developed a working relationship with the representative of the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs, Ms. Pat Arnould. Ms. Arnould is a member of the Agency's Community and Consumers Committee and also has taken a role in organizing meetings between the tribes and the Agency.
- A copy of the 2003 APSR and a draft of the 2005-2009 CFSP was sent to all tribes for their review and recommendations.
- The Agency will continue its efforts to reach formal and informal agreements with the tribes on child welfare policies and issues. Further, the Agency will continue to work with the tribes on case specific matters, as they become known.

**2.13 Child Abuse and Prevention Treatment Act**

Legal Reference 42 USC5106
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The Child Abuse and Neglect State Grants program is utilized in Louisiana to prevent, identify, and treat child abuse and neglect situations. These are coordinated, to the extent practicable, with the CFSP.

Under the 2003 amendments to the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), the State is required to adopt and implement certain legal and administrative procedures designed to protect children from abuse. These criteria are attested to in the assurance section of this plan.

**II. On-Going and New Program Initiatives For 2005-2009**

The Louisiana Department of Social Services, OCS, continues to be the designated state agency to manage the Child Abuse and Neglect (CAN) grant funds awarded to the State for the period July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005.

- The Agency's public relations and information campaign emphasizes education about agency functions and improving public perception of the Agency. This effort includes:
  - Media productions that include: fact sheets, brochures, child specific videos, bill boards, and posters to target specific campaigns such as foster care/adoption and child abuse/neglect prevention; continue recruitment of foster and adoptive families through use of posters, Public Service Announcements (PSA's) on television and radio; a training symposium that includes the media, agency personnel, and identified public professionals, with the emphasis on increasing community partnerships and forging improved coalitions between the Agency and the media; and in-house agency training for the designated regional media liaison staff on the relative media and public education strategy. The Agency believes that the information campaign will increase public awareness and education.
  - Support for a child fatality/serious injury prevention campaign. The Agency works with the Office of Public Health staff, state legislators, media specialists, public and not for profit representatives of substance abuse intervention programs and physicians to develop and distribute PSA's to radio and TV media around the State.
  - Use of a statewide Critical Incident Stress Management Team (CISM) and regional/local Peer Support and Care teams. The teams are available to provide ongoing support to staff prior to a critical incident and to respond to post-incident trauma experienced by staff. This objective is continued from previous years, and will be an ongoing initiative.
  - Coordination of preventive services with private organizations in order to support child abuse and neglect prevention efforts within the State. OCS has partnered with the state affiliate of Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana (PCAL) to serve at risk

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families through the provision of family support programs throughout the State. OCS has also partnered with PCAL to conduct on-going community outreach for individuals who are mandated reporters.

- Conducting public awareness campaigns to prevent child abuse and neglect (done by OCS and PCAL). An annual statewide candlelight vigil will be held throughout the State for child fatalities resulting from abuse and neglect. The candlelight vigil is held at the time of the opening of the legislative session. Additionally, OCS in partnership with PCAL distributes numerous brochures on child abuse/neglect and conducts presentations in classrooms, schools and universities throughout the State.
- A program for HIV and/or substance exposed children with Children's Hospital in New Orleans. This program to provide services to families who are identified with at least one HIV positive family member (typically a mother with at least one minor child). Many of these parents also have a history of substance abuse and are in need of a variety of social services including housing assistance. Because of the chaotic lifestyles of many of these families coupled with in-utero exposure of the infant to the HIV virus and/or illegal substances, many of these families are at risk of coming to the attention of the child protection system and into foster care. The Children's Hospital FACES program provides a variety of prevention and direct services to individuals and families at risk, infected or affected by the HIV virus. OCS foster parents who provide care for HIV children receive consultation and support services through the FACES program.
- Support for Citizen Review Panels by providing opportunities to become educated about other state's panels, by providing coordination of meetings and by providing technical assistance to aide in timely completion of annual reports.
- Support for the professional development of line staff, supervisors, and administrators to attend professional conferences and meetings, which offer opportunities for training, planning, and networking in child welfare issues. Staff returning from these professional development opportunities are expected to share resource materials and innovations that will be useful in OCS program development and implementation.
- Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) has been used successfully in other states and countries as a means of intervention in child abuse and neglect cases. In the FGDM process, the Agency organizes a case planning conference that involves the immediate family, other relatives and interested parties who could help assist the family in making a case plan that would best meet the needs of the children and family. FGDM stresses the importance of inclusiveness, partnership and community building.

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- Seeking to improve data collection to determine the successfulness of interventions planned with families. Plans are to consult with experts in the establishment of databases to track outcome data in the various OCS programs. The goal is to establish databases to track outcome data in the various OCS programs and to determine program effectiveness.
- It is anticipated that during the grant period, staff may attend the following major conferences and meetings:
  - University of Southern Maine National Resource Center for organizational improvement teleconferences series
  - Family Group Decision Making Conferences
  - Family Preservation Institute
  - Domestic Violence Annual Conference
  - APSAC National Conference
  - Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana Conference
  - Child Welfare League of America Public Agency Council on Family Preservation
  - NCCAN State Liaison Officers Meeting
  - National Conference on Child Victimization
  - American Public Welfare Association, Southern Regional and National Conferences
  - Louisiana Governor's Conference on Juvenile Justice
  - Families In Need of Service Conference
  - National Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) Conference
  - Louisiana Adoption Advisory Board Conference
  - North American Council for Adoptable Children



**2.14 Missing and Exploited Children Clearinghouse**

Legal Reference LA R.S. 46:1431-1434
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The State's Missing and Exploited Children Information Clearinghouse was established by LA. Revised Statute 46:1431 as the state central repository of information on missing and/or exploited children within the State and those suspected of interstate travel. A missing child is an individual under 18 years old who is or is believed to be a temporary or permanent resident of Louisiana, is at a location that cannot be determined by the person's parent or legal custodian, and has been reported missing to a law enforcement agency. An exploited child is an individual under 18 years of age who has been threatened and/or whose health or welfare has been harmed by any person through non accidental sexual contact which includes sexual abuse.

OCS has administrative responsibility for clearinghouse operations. Unlike the clearinghouses based with law enforcement agencies, the Louisiana Clearinghouse does not have the statutory or fiscal capabilities to assume an active role in search and recovery activities. Primarily, the clearinghouse efforts are geared toward collecting and disseminating information to assist in the location of missing children and the reporting of exploited children to the proper authorities. Direct services include:

- Distribution of photographs, bulletins, posters, and other forms of information describing missing children,
- Provision of informational materials to law enforcement agencies, parents, and interested citizens,
- Work with other state and international clearinghouses; criminal justice agencies and law enforcement agencies,
- Assistance to parents in contacting the appropriate law enforcement agency to file a missing child report and to obtain an NCIC (National Crime Information Computer) entry for the missing child. Parents also are assisted in contacting support groups and other available resources.

A state-of-the-art, multi-media computer system was donated to the state clearinghouse via a corporate sponsor solicited by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC). As a recipient, OCS agreed to dedicate the system solely for the purposes of clearinghouse activities. Essential hardware and software equipment, training and on-going technical assistance; system updates and routine maintenance; and, network access and system usage are furnished at no cost to the State. The system provides a medium for the exchange of information with the National Center and the other State Clearinghouses; and, helps to establish and maintain a centralized state MEC database as required by state statute. It also houses the LOCATER (Lost Child Alert Technology Resource) system, which has the capacity to develop, disseminate and receive posters of missing children.

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In partnership with the Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement, the Louisiana Children's Network website was established. This website is accessible to the general public and provides information for families with missing children. The website features current missing children in Louisiana as supplied by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and linkages to other websites.

**2.15 Safe Haven**

OCS will continue its efforts with a community and governmental agency task force dedicated to promoting local and statewide awareness of Louisiana's Safe Haven Relinquishment Act. Without any funding, this task force met to find ways to notify the public of the existence of this law.

Information on the Safe Haven Relinquishment Act was posted on the DSS website and letters were sent to various agencies such as the Hospital Association and the Department of Health and Hospitals. The letters asked that information about the Act be included in agency newsletters and mail outs.

Woman's Hospital's design department developed posters and cards to advertise safe havens. The posters and cards are to be distributed to the designated emergency care facilities. OCS obtained \$25,000 from the Children's Justice Act to help with the cost of printing and advertising. Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana (PCAL) gave OCS the use of their toll free number for people to call with questions regarding Safe Havens and trained their volunteers to handle these calls and make referrals to the local parish OCS offices. OCS contacted the city bus advertising department for Baton Rouge and suburban New Orleans and is in the process of purchasing one year's worth of advertising on the sides and interiors of city buses that travel throughout both major metropolitan areas. OCS is in the process of using the remaining budget on bus advertisements in Monroe as well as developing a Public Service Announcement.

The Department has engaged in several actions to publicize the Louisiana Safe Haven Relinquishment Act:

- A "Safe Haven Relinquishment Act Training Packet" for facilities (developed by the Safe Haven workgroup) has been posted on the Department website. This includes information such as the medical/genetic information form, the safe haven card, as well as more information about Safe Haven Relinquishments on the Department of Social Services website ([www.dss.state.la.us](http://www.dss.state.la.us)).
- \$25,000 was acquired last year from Children's Justice Act Grant to better publicize the Safe Haven legislation (see above). A working arrangement has been formed with Woman's Hospital (in Baton Rouge) for the use of their design team to create the posters. The Department paid for the printing. Additional printing of posters has been made possible through a local Rotary Club donation to Woman's Hospital.
- The Department spent \$1,000 to print 2,126 posters and \$500 to print 32,900 cards that "Designated Emergency Care Facilities" are to give to relinquishing parents.
- Letters have been sent to the heads of all of the Designated Emergency Care Facilities (such as the Assistant Secretary of OPH, the head of Care Pregnancy Centers, the president of Louisiana Hospital Association, the State Fire Marshall, the Executive Director of the LA Sheriff's Association, and the Executive Director of the LA Chief of Police Association) providing these agencies with notification that cards could be acquired on the internet at the Department of Social Services website or from their local Regional Office of Community Services. We also informed them in the letter that the

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DSS website has valuable information including specific information regarding the Safe Haven legislation as well as the training packet they can use to train their staff in their designated emergency care facilities.

- A promotional amount of \$15,000 was paid for acquisition of bus ads for seven king-size external ads and 30 interior poster ads in both suburban New Orleans (Jefferson Parish) and Baton Rouge. An additional amount of \$5,000 was paid in Monroe, LA for 4 bus benches, 2 bus sides, 2 bus backs and 2 bus shelters for six months of advertising. Plans are for future extensions of the run time on bus ads.
- With the approval the State Superintendent of Education, posters were distributed to middle schools and high schools throughout the State through their Regional District Superintendents on the Act. We also sent posters to Family Literacy Centers, Home Economics/Parenting classrooms, Adult Education Centers and Teen Pregnancy Prevention Programs so that the posters could be displayed to inform the public about the law.

In state fiscal year 2004, the Louisiana Legislature allocated \$50,000 for the further promotion of the Safe Haven legislation. With that, we will be entering into a contract with Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana (PCAL) to publicize safe havens. The oversight group will be reconvening in November 2004 to brainstorm other means to notify the public and utilize this contract.

**2.16 Louisiana Children's Trust Fund (Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention Program)**

The Louisiana Children's Trust Fund (CTF) provides for programs focused on primary and secondary prevention services statewide. The CTF recently enacted a five-year plan for 2003-2008. Examples of specific programs include:

- **Education and Support for Parents** – focuses attention on fatherhood initiatives, anger management and literacy programs, parent skill training, education on child safety issues, and teen parents.
- **Self Help Groups and Neighborhood Support Programs** – focuses on such as safe visitation centers, peer mentoring programs, family resource centers, hospital and home visitation parent education programs, e.g., Healthy Families Programs, and Community-based support groups.
- **Prevention and Life Skills Training for children and Youth** – focuses on education programs for child abuse and neglect risk factors, parenting and life skills training in the schools, therapeutic preschool programs that support young parents and offer early intervention to children.
- **Coordination and Continued Education of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention** - focuses on education of professionals on availability and use of an assessment tool, training of professionals about current prevention research and models, and mandated reporter training.
- **Public Awareness and Education Addressing the Problem** – focuses on education of the public about reporting child abuse and neglect, involvement of the faith-based community in promoting prevention and providing education about parenting, and development and implementation of a variety of methods which can inform people about where to go for help.

Each of the ten regions of the State served by CTF funded programs uses the above broad goal categories to establish proposals of services. The selected programs are funded through contracts, and services are monitored for effectiveness through out the year. Contracts are typically issued for a three year period. Only nonprofit and public agencies can qualify to submit applications for funding through the CTF. Every region is given the opportunity to prioritize various services under the five goals described above. The priority services are then bid upon by interested, qualified, providers or agencies. Grant applications are reviewed competitively by a multidisciplinary team of professionals from the community and the process is competitive for funding.

The distribution of CTF funding is made using a formula based on (1) the most recent number of child abuse and neglect reports in a region, (2) the population of the region, and (3) the total number of grant applications received from a region. Grants average between \$5,000 and

# STATE OF LOUISIANA

## **Child and Family Services Plan 2005 - 2009**

## **What We Do**

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\$15,000 with provision for applications above average if the project merits such. Grants cannot cross regional boundaries. The final recommendations for funding are forwarded to the grant review committee and recommendations are then forwarded to the CTF Board of Directors for final decision.

**2.17 Children's Justice Act Grant****Legal Reference:**

Children's Justice and Assistance Act of 1986, as amended, Title I, Section 102, Public Law 99-401; Child Abuse, Domestic Violence, Adoption, and Family Services Act of 1992, Public Law 102-295; Victims of Crime Act of 1984 (VOCA), as amended, Public Law 98-473; 42 U.S.C. 5106c.

The Louisiana Children's Justice Task Force is a multi disciplinary group of professionals and community level representatives with knowledge and experience related to the criminal justice system and the issues of child abuse and neglect. The recommendations of the Task Force for expenditures of grant funds have focused on the training of professionals involved in the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect, on the development of community based programs such as Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) and Child Advocacy Center (CAC), on the development of model and demonstration programs such as Mediation in "Child in Need of Care" cases and Family Group

Decision Making. Grants awarded are designed to improve the handling of child abuse and neglect cases, particularly cases of child sexual abuse and exploitation, which limits additional trauma to the child victim. Grants are also awarded to improve the investigation and prosecution of cases of child abuse and neglect and the handling of suspected child abuse and neglect related fatalities.

**On-Going Activities**

- To continue funding and sponsorship of the Court Improvement Project (CIP), a statewide child welfare conference. Participants include: judges, district attorneys, multi-disciplinary team professionals, OCS program and legal staff and community representatives who deal with the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect cases.
- To continue to sponsor, in conjunction with other child welfare entities, an annual statewide child welfare conference to provide training, information, and opportunities to network on child abuse related issues, especially those involving the investigation, prosecution, and handling of child abuse cases which limits additional trauma to the child victim.
- To continue to help in the development of community based organizations designed to help in the investigation, prosecution, and handling of child abuse cases, such as CASA programs and CAC programs, and to support the statewide Louisiana CASA Association and Children's Advocacy Centers of Louisiana Organizations.
- To sponsor demonstration projects such as "Mediation" and "Family Group Decision Making" and develop a model program such as the "Infant Team Model" in order to continue to develop the best solutions addressing child abuse.
- To continue to support the coordination and training of Child Death Review Panels in Louisiana in order to promote prevention of child deaths.

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### **Child and Family Services Plan 2005 - 2009**

### **What We Do**

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- To provide funding for specialized training related to the field of child abuse, both regionally and statewide, when areas of needed training are identified.
- To sponsor research of the child protection system and laws in order to make recommendations for improvement.
- To sponsor an annual seminar for the Children's Justice Task Force members to develop a comprehensive assessment and to plan for the Children's Justice Act Grant in Louisiana.
- To provide monitoring of all contracts funded through the Children's Justice Act Grant including on-site reviews to insure compliance with grant guidelines and to promote quality services.



**2.18 Court Improvement Project /Children's Advocacy Resource Effort****Legal Reference**

42 USC629(d)(2)  
42 USC629h

Louisiana continues to receive federal grant funds to support the Louisiana Court Improvement Program/Child Advocacy Resource Effort (LCIP/CARE) through the state Supreme Court. Guidance to the Louisiana Court Improvement Program is provided by

Supreme Court staff and an advisory committee composed of judges from each of the State's four specialized juvenile courts, district and city court judges exercising juvenile jurisdiction, representatives of DSS/OCS, private foster care providers, the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Program, district attorneys, public defenders, legal aid attorneys, private attorneys with foster care and adoption experience, clerks of court, American Indian Tribal organizations, and the state Foster Parent Association.

A strategic plan outlines goals and objectives for the LCIP/CARE for the time period from October 1, 2002 – September 30, 2006. DSS/OCS will continue to support and actively participate in these court improvement activities and engage in constructive problem-solving with other system participants toward resolving issues. Building stronger collaborative relationships through which positive systematic changes can be made on behalf of Louisiana's children is also a key focus.

The project originally identified a number of areas of court functioning in need of improvement:

- To change court procedures and practice to reduce the number of continuances, to more closely adhere to statutory time lines for conducting hearings, and to otherwise expedite decision making on behalf of the children.
- To better train attorneys and judges in child welfare issues in order to encourage more effective representation and informed decision making.
- To improve court information systems in order to facilitate better case management.
- To utilize case docketing mechanisms which minimize the amount of time which parties, attorneys, witnesses and agency personnel must wait for hearings to begin.
- To provide for better coordination and communication between the court and the Agency.

**On-Going Activities:**

The Agency plans to initiate or continue activities in the following areas:

- Participate on the LCIP/CARE Advisory Committee and support implementation of the LCIP/CARE Strategic Plan.

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## Child and Family Services Plan 2005 - 2009

## What We Do

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- Facilitate active participation of the judiciary in implementation of the CFSR Program Improvement Plan. Convene work groups to address delays in the court hearing process and to develop a statewide curriculum for legal stakeholders, OCS staff, Office of Youth Development (OYD) and other relevant stakeholders on federal, state and agency regulations regarding permanency.
- Co-sponsor with LCIP and other child welfare partners the annual, statewide multi-disciplinary Together We Can Conference. When available, facilitate agency participation with the Louisiana court system in live national satellite, video, and telephone conferences highlighting improvement strategies and child welfare best practices.
- Develop a plan to implement statewide education on permanency with courts, attorneys, OCS staff, OYD and other relevant stakeholders.
- Participate in workgroup to plan appropriate data integration and information exchange between automated information systems of DSS, OYD, and the court system.
- Participate in and support the CAMP Mediation Pilot Program.
- Support and participate in local court facilitation teams.
- Complete the work of the task force on legal representation in child protection cases co-chaired by the Chief Justice of the Louisiana Supreme Court and the Secretary of DSS.
- Participate in other collaborative activities with courts and the broader communities they serve.

### **2.19 Citizen Review Panels**

The child abuse and prevention treatment state grants program is utilized in Louisiana to prevent, identify, and treat child abuse and neglect situations. The 1996 CAPTA amendments require Louisiana to establish three Citizen Review Panels (CRPs). With OCS support and guidance, six CRPs have been established.

#### **Louisiana Citizen Review Panels:**

- Covington Region CRP
- Rapides Parish CRP
- Calcasieu Parish CRP (inactive at this time)
- Beauregard Parish CRP
- Shreveport Region CRP
- Monroe Region CRP

#### **Role of Citizen Review Panels**

- Evaluate the State's child protective service system
- Submit annual reports summarizing yearly activities
- Make recommendations to OCS for improving the State's protective service system
- Lobby the Louisiana Legislature to preserve/procure funding for service delivery
- Educate the community regarding child protective services

#### **OCS Responsibility to Citizen Review Panels**

- Provide technical assistance regarding the organization, the service delivery system and various grant opportunities
- Submit available CRP annual reports to the Administration for Children & Families by December 31<sup>st</sup>
- Include CRP reports in the Annual Progress and Service Report (APSR) submitted to ACF on or before June 30<sup>th</sup> of each year
- Review CRP recommendations
- Address panel concerns
- Implement recommendations whenever possible
- Respond to CRP recommendations in writing

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## **Child and Family Services Plan 2005 - 2009**

## **What We Do**

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The Agency is committed to the success of Citizen Review Panels and will improve upon processes to provide technical assistance and support to the panels. By responding timely to their recommendations and assisting them in implementing strategies that may be within their ability to implement, they will be more enabled to help to improve Louisiana's child protection system.

## **2.20 Management Information System**

The Agency is working with other departmental agencies to develop and implement A Comprehensive Enterprise Social Services System (ACCESS) that would be beneficial for the Department, its staff and the citizens it serves. This approach will allow all users to see benefits at the earliest time possible as well as allow for the ever-changing needs of the Department.

Use of an Enterprise Framework approach should result in shorter development times, reduced costs, and programmatic efficiencies. Perhaps more important, it will enable DSS staff to focus more time on providing services to its clients. Additional benefits include:

- Leveraged technical environment
- Shared data
- Shared processes
- Browser enabled
- Faster turnaround
- Improve Staff Efficiency
- Increase Staff Job Satisfaction
- Improved Data and Reporting
- Enhanced Case Management Functions
- Enhance Provider Management Functions
- Streamline the Quality Assurance Functions

Another requirement of ACCESS is that it will be deployed in a uniform manner not only across all field offices, regional offices, program central offices and the DSS headquarters located in Baton Rouge, but deployed such that components of the DSS ACCESS system will be accessed remotely by staff and via the Web by the citizens, clients, providers, courts, and other interested stakeholders. The highlighting aspect of this enterprise project approach is the ability to provide stakeholders with multiple views into any single system, while concurrently providing a single common view to multiple systems. Our vision is to provide a secure, stable enterprise that promotes interactive communication and collaborative sharing of information among all appropriate public and private agencies, and affected citizens.

ACCESS should offer consistency that assists workers and supervisors in tracking individual children and families from the point of initial contact to the point of case closure. ACCESS includes a service plan driven system, views that show relationships among case, clients and families, search and retrieval functions that meet the needs of workers and supervisors. The replacement, standardization, and reduction of forms are also included. In addition, ACCESS must assist in the automation of the OCS safety and risk assessment, case plan, automation of case file folders, and automation of the following process: licensing, Title IV-E Foster Care maintenance determination/ predetermination, and fiscal and accounting functions including eligibility for

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**Child and Family Services Plan 2005 - 2009**

**What We Do**

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services and fiscal reporting. ACCESS must meet full federal compliance as a Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) at the end of the three-year contract with IBM and partners.

**2.21 Research/Evaluation and Technical Assistance****2.21.A Research in Support of OCS Programs 2005-2009**

**Factors that May Contribute to Length of Stay in Foster Care** - Karen Faulk, LSU student and OCS employee, is using aggregate data from the Agency's child welfare data system to investigate the length of stay in foster care. The research complements activities described in the PIP Safety Outcome 1, Item 2a, "Repeat Maltreatment" (Recurrence) and Item 2b, "Repeat Maltreatment" (Maltreatment of children in foster care).

**Research on Selected Outcomes for Children in the Child Welfare System Who Entered the System in the period from fiscal year 1999-2000 through fiscal year 2003-2004** - LSU School of Social Work research department is using aggregate data from the child welfare data system. This project will focus on four broad types of outcomes: Adoption, maltreatment in foster care, child fatalities, and juvenile justice involvement.

Central questions for this project include:

- Of the children in this cohort who were adopted, how many had adoptions completed within 32 months as required by law?
- How many children in the cohort were maltreated by foster parents subsequent to their placement in foster care?
- How many children during this period died? What were the circumstances of death? What services was the family involved in at the time of death?
- How many children were transferred from residential foster care into the juvenile justice system for delinquent behavior or status offenses?

For each of the four outcomes, additional questions will address demographic and other descriptive factors associated with each outcome type, life histories (to the extent that the data may reveal this), as well as regional variations for each type. OCS databases will be used to examine these questions, and this research is expected to result in published scholarly papers. The research relates to PIP Permanency Outcome 1, Item a, "Adoption within 24 months."

**Multidisciplinary Research Center for Vulnerable Children and Families** - OCS is working with the LSU School of Social Work's new research center for vulnerable children and families. The center will involve the department of human ecology, etc. OCS will also be a part of this new research center which will focus on the development of child welfare research. The research complements activities described in the PIP Well Being Outcome 1 "Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs."

**National Consortium** - OCS will be working with LSU and other state universities as part of the national consortium of child welfare and university partnerships through the University of

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Illinois. The research relates to Section 3.1.B “Staff Training Goals” in the new 5 year plan under “Where We Are Going.”



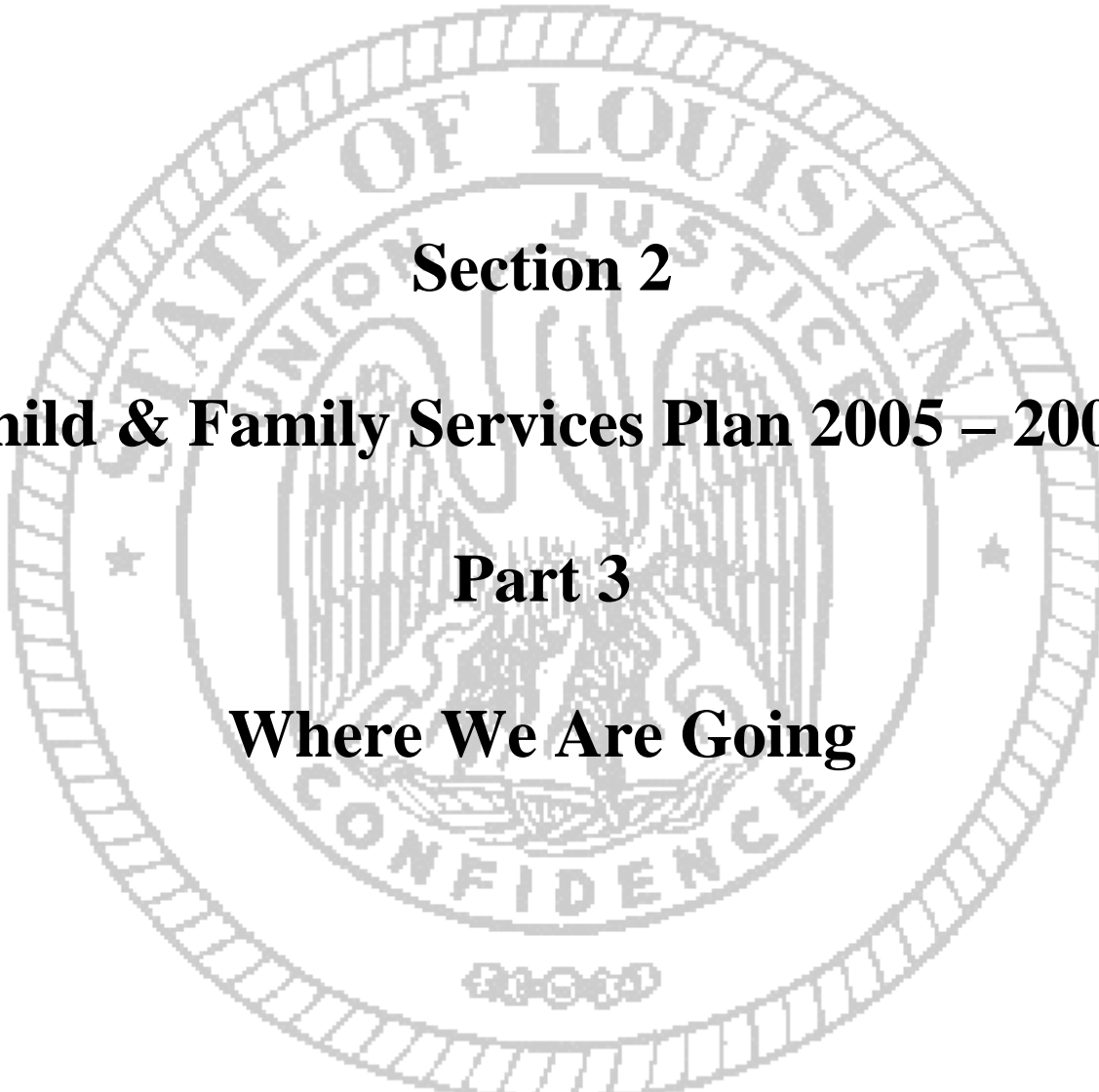
**2.21.B Technical Assistance Plans**

- A. The Agency will continue to utilize the training and technical assistance from federal contractors through the National Resource Centers. The assistance will be especially helpful as the PIP is implemented and needs are identified.
  
- B. The Agency will continue to participate in a variety of surveys and research projects with academia or other sources. The Agency will utilize the results to increase quality practice, expand knowledge and to identify and utilize exemplary models of child welfare practice. The Agency has traditionally participated in university-based surveys both from within the state and nationally. Expected surveys on the state of child welfare practice in the state from such groups as the National Urban League and Child Welfare League of America are also anticipated. The Agency will cooperate with federal site visits regarding demonstrations of exemplary models of funding utilization and program implementation using funding from the Social Services Block Grant.

State of Louisiana

Child & Family Services Plan 2005 - 2009

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The seal of the State of Louisiana is a large, circular emblem in the background. It features an eagle with wings spread, perched on a shield. The shield is supported by two figures, likely representing Liberty and Justice. The words "STATE OF LOUISIANA" are written in an arc at the top, and "CONFIDENCE" is written in an arc at the bottom. The year "1804" is visible at the very bottom of the seal.

**Section 2**  
**Child & Family Services Plan 2005 – 2009**  
**Part 3**  
**Where We Are Going**

**STATE OF LOUISIANA**

**3 Goals and Objectives**

**System Wide Goal 1: Increase the integration of first line supervisors and first line staff in delivery of improved services to achieve safety, permanency, and well being for the children served.**

**Action Step 1: Using input from program and field levels of the organization, assess and address barriers that impede quality service delivery.**

<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Date of Achievement</b>	<b>Lead</b>
1. Convene representative workgroup of program/field staff to study issues* and take steps to reduce barriers encountered by the work force.	April 2006	Field Services Division
2. Submit acquisitions request to the OCS Executive Management Team.		
3. Request funding for additional staff and services.		
<b>Measurements</b>		
Meeting documentation, recommendations list, funding request.		

**Action Step 2: Increase supervisory involvement in practice.**

<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Date of Achievement</b>	<b>Lead</b>
1. Develop and implement supervisor’s checklist for use in case monitoring and compliance with key performance outcomes.	December 2004	Program Division, Resource Development and QA Division
<b>Measurements</b>		
Checklist		

**\*maximize available use “hardware” for access to data, i.e., identify need among field staff for laptops, notebooks, tablet PC’s, and other mobile electronic word processing devices, reduce paper work.**

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**System Wide Goal 2: Improve technological capacity and external relationships to better serve children and families.**

**Action Step 1: Maximize use of integrated, reduced paper tracking and payment system.**

<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Date of Achievement</b>	<b>Lead</b>
1. Establish a technologically sound, SACWIS-like system, currently called "A Comprehensive Enterprise Social Services System" (ACCESS), to assist with uniformly driven case plan systems, tracking of families and children. The system is planned to reflect relationships between cases, clients, and families.	March 2007	ACCESS Team
<b>Measurements</b>		
Annual Progress Report on ACCESS		

**Action Step 2: Expand collaborative strategies and implement plans with community partners.**

<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Date of Achievement</b>	<b>Lead</b>
1. Consult with the appropriate national resource center to access the Liaison with State Legislatures Project to develop collaborative strategies and implement plans to enhance partnership with service providers and stakeholders, i.e., judicial and legislative stakeholders, to increase/improve services and service delivery.	October 2005	Assistant Secretary; Policy, Planning and Accreditation Section (P & A Section)
<b>Measurements</b>		
Agenda from planning meeting with NRC, list of participants in T/TA Meeting, Proposed Plan from meeting.		

**Action Step 3: Maximize use of external and Federal level funding.**

<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Date of Achievement</b>	<b>Lead</b>
1. Monitor availability of funding opportunities, disseminate internally and externally, and monitor internal grant applications.	December 2004 and annually	Policy, Planning and Accreditation Section (P & A Section)
<b>Measurements</b>		
Disseminated information, grant applications		

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**System Wide Goal 3: Provide staff and foster parents with a training program that will increase necessary knowledge, skills, and resources for quality child welfare services.**

**Action Step 1: Inform, provide and maintain standards of staff training as mandated by and that meet agency policy, state laws, and accreditation standard requirements.**

<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Date of Achievement</b>	<b>Lead</b>
1. Promote and provide on an ongoing basis, basic level core courses, internet training, staff training, coordinate with the Comprehensive Public Training Program, distance learning, video conferences and technical assistance to staff and foster parents.	December 2005	Field Services Division, Training Section
<b>Measurements</b>		
Training Catalog, training delivery sign in sheets, training evaluations		
<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Date of Achievement</b>	<b>Lead</b>
2. Revise and issue staff development catalog to managers, supervisors, and line staff and foster parents	May 2004, Distribution: May 2005	Field Services Division, Training Section
<b>Measurements</b>		
Training Catalog, transmittal memo for issuance.		
<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Date of Achievement</b>	<b>Lead</b>
3. Develop and provide supervisory training emphasizing partnership and transfer of learning (as outlined in the Staff Develop Catalog) to agency managers, supervisors, and line staff.	December 2005; thereafter, the training will be ongoing	Field Services Division, Training Section
<b>Measurements</b>		
Supervisory training package, sign in sheets, training evaluations.		

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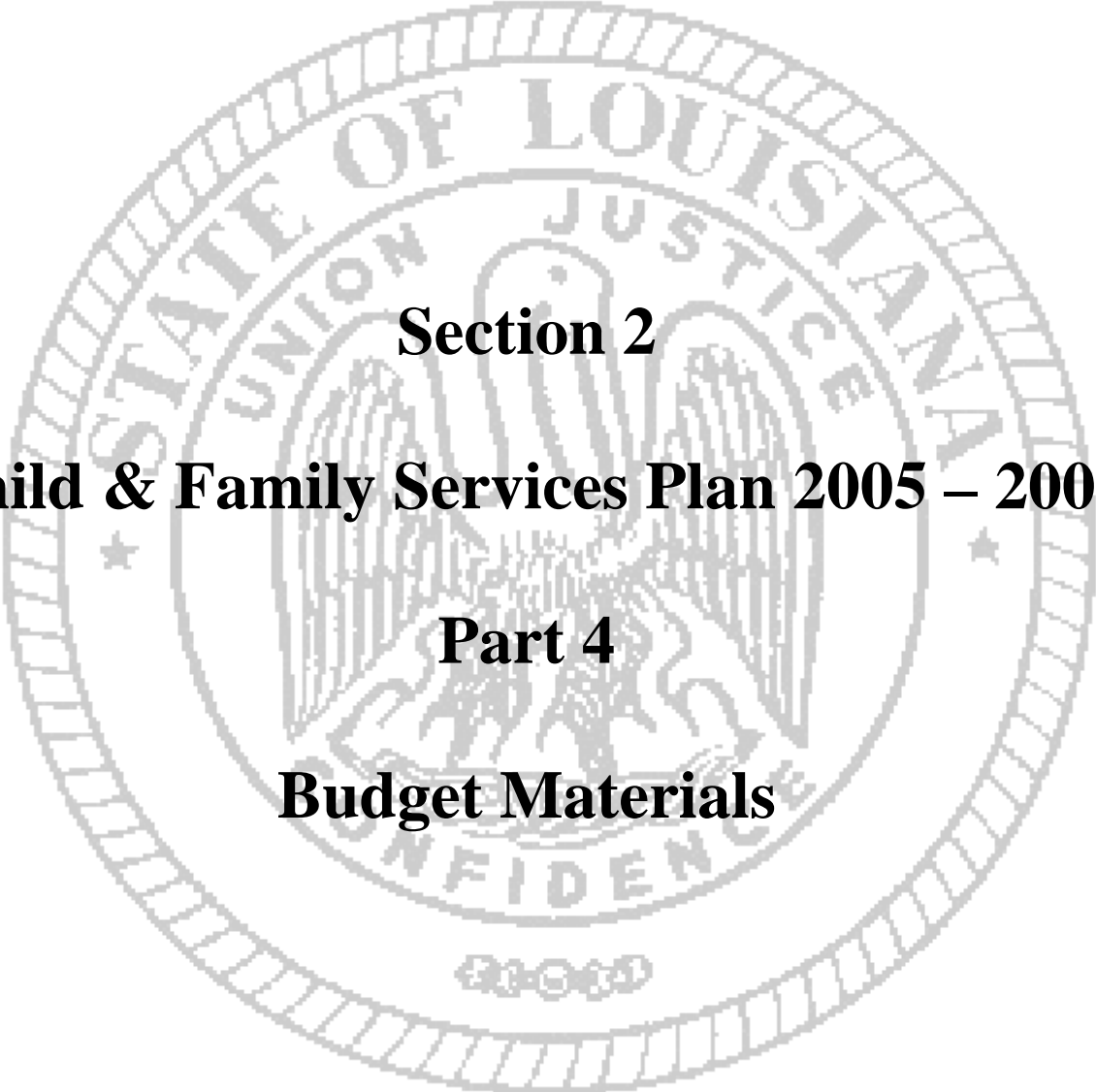
**Action Step 2: Maximize inclusion and participation of universities for needs assessment and collaboration.**

<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Date of Achievement</b>	<b>Lead</b>
1. Develop a contract utilizing IV-E funding to survey staff and foster parents to determine training needs and use tabulated survey data, and to make mid course adjustments.	June 2005	Field Services division, Training Section
<b>Measurements</b>		
IV-E Contract, resulting needs survey, survey data, analysis report to include any mid course adjustments.		
<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Date of Achievement</b>	<b>Lead</b>
2. Continue the Agency/University collaborative partnership Child Welfare & Curriculum Program with the 7 state universities and the IV-E Stipend Program/Tuition Reimbursement Program. The Agency will continue the Tuition Reimbursement and Employee Stipend Program.	July 2005 – 2009	Field Services Division, Training Section
<b>Measurements</b>		
Contract with Universities, selection criteria for stipends, student graduation, updated IV-E Child Welfare Resource Book.		

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Child and Family Services Plan 2005 - 2009

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The seal of the State of Louisiana is a large, circular emblem in the background. It features an eagle with wings spread, perched on a shield. The shield is supported by two figures, one on each side. The eagle's talons are raised. The words "STATE OF LOUISIANA" are written in a circular path around the top of the seal. Below the eagle, the words "UNION JUSTITIA ANNA" are visible. At the bottom of the seal, the word "CONFIDENCE" is written. The year "1804" is also present at the very bottom of the seal.

**Section 2**  
**Child & Family Services Plan 2005 – 2009**  
**Part 4**  
**Budget Materials**





# STATE OF LOUISIANA

## Child and Family Services Plan 2005 - 2009

## Budget Materials

OHB APPROVAL # 0890-0047  
Approved through July 1, 2005

CFSS-101, PART II: ANNUAL SUMMARY OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES  
For FY October 1, 2004 TO September 30, 2005  
State of Louisiana

SERVICES/ACTIVITIES	ESTIMATED EXPENDITURES BY PROGRAM (IN THOUSANDS)										(k) NUMBER TO BE SERVED	(l) POP. TO BE SERVED	(m) GEOG. AREA TO BE SERVED
	(a) HCMS	(b) H-SSSF	(c) CAPTA	(d) CFCD	(e) TITLE IV-E	(f) TITLE XX (SSBG)	(g) TITLE N/A (TANF)	(h) TITLE XXI (Medicaid)	(i) OTHER FED PROG.	(j) STATE LOCAL DONATED FUNDS			
1) PREVENTION & SUPPORT SERVICES (Family Support)	2,138	2,880	117			3,204	1,056		198	4,368	26,222	All eligible children & adults	Statewide
2) PROTECTIVE SERVICES	1,457		274			864	2,651		457	486	26,877	Abuse/neglect	Statewide
3) CRISIS INTERVENTION (Family Preservation)													
(a) PREPLACEMENT PREVENTION			1,430									Children, youth	Statewide
(b) REUNIFICATION SERVICES			1,430									All children	Statewide
4) TIME-LIMITED FAMILY REUNIFICATION SERVICES			2,859									All children in Foster Care	Statewide
5) ADOPTION PROMOTION AND SUPPORT SERVICES		2,859										Parent/Child	Statewide
6) FOSTER CARE MAINTENANCE: (a) FOSTER FAMILY & RELATIVE FOSTER CARE	1,301											All children	Statewide
(b) GROUP/INSTITUTIONAL CARE												All eligible	Statewide
7) ADOPTION SUBSIDY Pmts.					10,723							All eligible	Statewide
8) INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES												All eligible	Statewide
9) ADMINISTRATION & MANAGEMENT	1,263	1,118		1,494	33,481					4,371	4,350	All eligible	Statewide
10) STAFF TRAINING		153			5,578					374	1,100	All eligible	Statewide
11) FOSTER PARENT RECRUITMENT & TRAINING													
12) ADOPTIVE PARENT RECRUITMENT & TRAINING													
13) CHILD CARE RELATED TO EMPLOYMENT/TRAINING													
14) TOTAL	6,158	12,708	391	1,494	77,390	5,271	10,656	15,082	74,182	71,328	46,663	All eligible	Statewide

States Only: Indian Tribes are not required to include information on these programs.  
Medicaid, SSR, SSA, VA, Child Care Block Grant, Children's Justice Act, Community Based Family Resource  
Other Federal Programs:

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ESTIMATED BUDGET MATERIAL FOR  
CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT STATE GRANT  
FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2005

October 1, 2004 through September 30, 2005  
CFDA 93.669

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT ACT  
AMENDMENT OF 1996 (P.L. 104-235)

EMPLOYEE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER: 726000800  
BASIC GRANT APPLICATION AMOUNT: \$375,000.00

PROGRAM INITIATIVE			DOLLAR AMOUNT
Initiative	1	Public Relations and Information	30,000.00
Initiative	2	Child Fatality/Serious Injury Prevention	25,000.00
Initiative	3	Critical Incident/Response & Recovery	60,000.00
Initiative	4	Prevention Services	35,000.00
Initiative	5	Services for HIV/Substance Exposed Children	65,000.00
Initiative	6	Support Citizen Review Panel Activities	10,000.00
Initiative	7	Conferences/Training	40,000.00
Initiative	8	Equipment & Supplies	30,000.00
Initiative	9	Assessment Model	10,000.00
Initiative	10	Family Group Decision-Making	35,000.00
Initiative	11	Domestic Violence Services	15,000.00
Initiative	12	Database Program Evaluation	<u>20,000.00</u>
TOTAL FUNDS AWARDED			\$375,000.00

Note: This budget statement is being submitted in this form at the direction of Dallas Regional Office. The State reserves the right to adjust these proposed dollar figures based on analysis of initiatives' effectiveness from prior year.

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**Child and Family Services Plan 2005 - 2009**

**Budget Materials**

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Administration for Children and Families

OMB Approval #0980-0047  
Approved through July 31, 2005

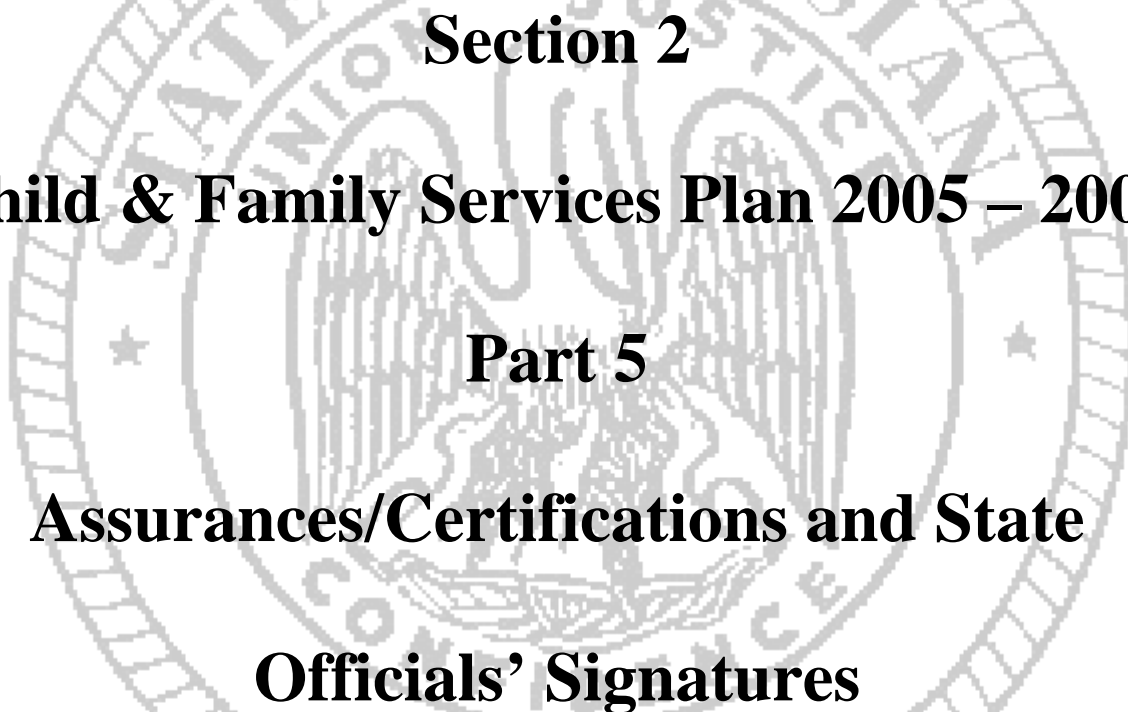
**CFS-101, PART I: Annual Budget Request for Title IV-B, Subpart 1 & 2 Funds, CAPTA, Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) and Education & Training Vouchers (ETV):  
Fiscal Year 2004, October 1, 2003 through September 30, 2004**

1. State or ITO: Louisiana	2. EIN: 1-72-600-0800-A1
3. Address: DSS - Office of Community Services P. O. Box 3318 Baton Rouge, LA 70821	4. Submission:  ( ) New      (X) Revision
5. Estimated Title IV-B, Subpart 1 Funds	\$6,279
6. Total Estimated Title IV-B Subpart 2 Funds (This amount should equal the sum of lines a-f.)	\$11,828
(a) Total Family Preservation Services	\$2,661
(b) Total Family Support Services	\$2,662
(c) Total Time-Limited Family Reunification Services	\$2,661
(d) Total Adoption Promotion and Support Services	\$2,661
(e) Total for Other Service Related Activities (e.g. planning)	\$0
(f) Total Administration (not to exceed 10% of estimated allotment)	\$1,183
7. Re-allotment of Title IV-B, Subpart 2 funds for State and Indian Tribal Organizations	
a) Indicate the amount of the State's/Tribe's allotment that will not be required to carry out the Promoting Safe and Stable Families program. \$ _____	
b) If additional funds become available to States and ITOs, specify the amount of additional funds the State or Tribes is requesting \$1,183	
8. Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), Basic State Grant (no State match required)	
Estimate BSG Amount \$403,103 plus additional allocation, as available.	
9. Estimated Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) funds.	\$1,494
10. Estimated Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Funds.	\$400,401 <i>at lead</i>
11. Re-allotment of CFCIP and ETV Funds:	
a) Indicate the amount of the State's allotment that will not be required to carry out CFCIP \$ _____	
b) Indicate the amount of the State's allotment that will not be required to carry out ETV \$ _____	
c) If additional funds become available to States, specify the amount of additional funds the State is requesting for CFCIP \$149      for ETV \$40	
12. Certification by State Agency and/or Indian Tribal Organization	
The State agency or Indian Tribe submits the above estimates and request for funds under Title IV-B, subpart 1 and/or 2, of the Social Security Act, CAPTA State Grant and CFCIP, and agrees that expenditures will be made in accordance with the Child and Family Services Plan, which has been jointly developed with, and approved by, the ACF Regional Office, for the Fiscal Year ending September 30.	
Signature and Title of State/Tribal Agency Official  <i>James Schweitzer Williams</i> Date <i>8/19/04</i>	Signature and Title of Regional Office Official  <i>Leon R. McCowan</i> <b>LEON R. MCCOWAN, REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR</b> Date <i>8/30/04</i>

STATE OF LOUISIANA

Child and Family Services Plan 2005 - 2009

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The seal of the State of Louisiana is a large, faint watermark in the background. It features a central figure of a pelican feeding its young in a nest, surrounded by a circular border with the text "STATE OF LOUISIANA" and "COMMISSION OF JUSTICE".

**Section 2**

**Child & Family Services Plan 2005 – 2009**

**Part 5**

**Assurances/Certifications and State**

**Officials' Signatures**

STATE OF LOUISIANA

STATE OF LOUISIANA

ANNUAL PROGRESS AND SERVICES REPORT SIGNATURE PAGE

EFFECTIVE DATE AND SECRETARY'S SIGNATURE

I hereby certify that the State of Louisiana complies with the requirements of law listed in the Assurances and Certifications Section. I have reviewed and approve the 2004 Annual Progress and Services Report submitted herein.

Date: 6/1/04

Certified by Ann Silverberg Williamson

Title Secretary

Agency: Department of Social Services

# STATE OF LOUISIANA

## Child and Family Services Plan 2005 – 2009 Assurances/Certifications and State Officials' Signatures

Attachment E

### Title IV-B Child and Family Services Plan: Assurances

The assurances listed below are in 45 CFR 1357.15(c) and title IV-B sections 422(b)(10), 422(b)(12), section 422 (b) (14), section 432(a)(4), 432 (a)(7) and 432(a)(9). These assurances will remain in effect during the period of the current five-year CFSP.

1. The State assures that it will participate in any evaluations the Secretary of HHS may require.
2. The State assures that it will administer the CFSP in accordance with methods determined by the Secretary to be proper and efficient.
3. The State assures that it has a plan for the training and use of paid paraprofessional staff, with particular emphasis on the full-time or part-time employment of low-income persons, as community service aides; and a plan for the use of non-paid or partially paid volunteers in providing services and in assisting any advisory committees established by the State.
4. The State assures that standards and requirements imposed with respect to child care under title XX shall apply with respect to day care services, if provided under the CFSP, except insofar as eligibility for such services is involved.
5. The State assures that it is operating, to the satisfaction of the Secretary:
  - o a statewide information system from which can be readily determined the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is (or, within the immediately preceding 12 months, has been) in foster care;
  - o a case review system (as defined in section 475(5) for each child receiving foster care under the supervision of the State;
  - o a service program designed to help children-where safe and appropriate, return to families from which they have been removed; or be placed for adoption, with a legal guardian, or, if adoption or legal guardianship is determined not to be appropriate for a child, in some other planned, permanent living arrangement; and
  - o a preplacement preventive services program designed to help children at risk of foster care placement remain safely with their families; and
  - o The State assures that it has implemented policies and administrative and judicial procedures for children abandoned at or shortly after birth that are necessary to enable permanent decisions to be made expeditiously with respect to the placement of such children.
6. The State assures that plans will be developed for the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children.
7. The State assures that it will collect and report information on children who are adopted from other countries and who enter State custody as a result of the disruption of an adoptive placement, or the dissolution of an adoption. Such information will include the reasons for disruption or dissolution, the agencies who handled the placement or adoption, the plans for the child, and the number of children to whom this pertains.
8. The State assures that no more than 10 percent of expenditures under the plan for any fiscal year with respect to which the State is eligible for payment under section 434 of the Act for the fiscal year shall be for administrative costs and that the remaining expenditures shall be for programs of family preservation services, community-based family support services, time-limited reunification services and adoption promotion and support services, with significant portions of such expenditures for each such program.
9. The State assures that Federal funds provided to the State for title IV-B, Subpart 2 programs will not be used to supplant Federal or non-Federal funds for existing services and activities.
10. The State assures that, in administering and conducting service programs under this plan, the safety of the children to be served shall be of paramount concern.

STATE OF LOUISIANA

Child and Family Services Plan 2005 – 2009 Assurances/Certifications and State Officials' Signatures

Effective Date and State Officials Signature

I hereby certify that the State complies with the requirements of the above assurances.

Certified by: Ann Silverberg Williamson

Title: Secretary

Agency: Department of Social Services

Dated: 6/1/04

Reviewed by: Thurston Jones  
(ACF Regional Representative)

Dated: January 3, 2005

STATE OF LOUISIANA

Child and Family Services Plan 2005 – 2009 Assurances/Certifications and State Officials' Signatures

SFY 2004-2005 CERTIFICATION REGARDING DRUG FREE WORKPLACE

REQUIREMENTS- STATES AND STATE AGENCIES

This certification is required by the regulations implementing the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, 34 CFR Part 85, Subpart F. The regulations, published in the May 25, 1990, Federal Register, require certification by grantees, prior to award, that they will maintain a drug-free workplace. Section 85.630(c) of the regulations provide that a grantee that is a State may elect to make one certification in each Federal fiscal year. The certificate set out below is a material representation of fact upon which reliance will be placed when the agency determines to award the grant. False certification or violation of the certification shall be grounds for suspension of payments, suspension, or termination of grants, or government-wide suspension or debarment (see 34 CFR Part 85, Sections 85.615 and 85.620).

- A. The grantee certified that it will or will continue to provide a drug-free workplace by:
(a) Publishing a statement notifying employees that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in the grantee's workplace and specifying the actions that will be taken against employees for violation of such prohibition;
(b) Establishing an ongoing drug-free awareness program to inform employees about
(1) The dangers of drug abuse in the workplace;
(2) The grantee's policy of maintaining a drug-free workplace;
(3) Any available drug counseling, rehabilitation, and employee assistance programs; and
(4) The penalties that may be imposed upon employees for drug abuse violations occurring in the workplace;
(c) Making it a requirement that each employee to be engaged in the performance of the grant be given a copy of the statement required by paragraph (a);
(d) Notifying the employee in the statement required by paragraph (a) that, as a condition of employment under the grant, the employee will-
(1) Abide by the terms of the statement; and
(2) Notify the employer in writing of his or her conviction for a violation of a criminal drug statute occurring in the workplace no later than five calendar days after such conviction;
(e) Notifying the agency, in writing, within ten calendar days after receiving notice under subparagraph (d)(2) from an employee or otherwise receiving actual notice of such conviction. Employers of convicted employees must provide notice, including position title, to every grant officer or other designee on whose grant activity the convicted employee designated a central point for the receipt of such notices. Notice shall include the identification number(s) of each affected grant;
(f) Taking one of the following actions, within 30 calendar days of receiving notice under subparagraph (d)(2); with respect to any employee who is so convicted-
(1) Taking appropriate personnel action against such an employee, up to and including termination, consistent with the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; or
(2) Requiring such employee to participate satisfactorily in a drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program approved for such purposes by a Federal, State, or local health, law enforcement, or other appropriate agency;
(g) Making a good faith effort to continue to maintain a drug-free workplace through implementation of paragraphs (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), and (f).

B. The grantee may insert in the space provided below the site(s) for the performance of work done in connection with the specific grant:

Place of Performance (Street address, city, county, state, zip code)
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES, 755 THIRD STREET, EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH, BATON ROUGE, LA 70802

Check \_\_\_ if there are workplaces on file that are not identified here.

Organization Name: DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Name and Title of Authorized Representative: Ann Silverberg Williamson, SECRETARY

Signature: [Handwritten Signature] Date: May 17, 2004

States electing to exclude certain state agencies from the statewide certification append to this form a list of the agencies not covered by the terms of this certification.



STATE OF LOUISIANA

SFY 2004-2005 CERTIFICATION REGARDING DEBARMENT, SUSPENSION, AND OTHER RESPONSIBILITY MATTERS - PRIMARY COVERED TRANSACTIONS

(1) The prospective primary participant certifies to the best of its knowledge and belief that it and its principals:

- (a) are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from covered transactions by any Federal Department or agency;
- (b) have not within a 3-year period preceding this proposal been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against them for commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public (Federal, State, or Local) transaction or contract under a public transaction; violation of Federal or State antitrust statutes or commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification, or destruction of records, making false statements, or receiving stolen property;
- (c) are not presently indicted or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (Federal, State, or Local) with commission of any of the offenses enumerated in paragraph (1)(b) of this certification; and
- (d) have not within a three-year period preceding this application/proposal had one or more public transactions (Federal, State, or Local) terminated for cause or default.

(2) Where the prospective primary participant is unable to certify to any of the statements in this certification, such prospective participant shall attach an explanation to this proposal.

The prospective primary participant agrees that by submitting this proposal, it will include the clause entitled "Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility, and Voluntary Exclusion - Lower Tier Covered Transaction" which is provided below.

CERTIFICATION REGARDING DEBARMENT, SUSPENSION, INELIGIBILITY AND VOLUNTARY EXCLUSION - LOWER TIER COVERED TRANSACTIONS

(1) The prospective lower tier participant certifies, by submission of this proposal, that neither it nor its principals is presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by any Federal department or agency.

(2) Where prospective lower tier participant is unable to certify to any of the statements in this certification, such prospective participant shall attach an explanation to this proposal.

The prospective lower tier participant further agrees by submitting this proposal that it will include this clause entitled "Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility, and Voluntary Exclusion - Lower Tier Covered Transactions" without modification in all lower tier covered transactions and in all solicitations for lower tier covered transactions.

Organization Name: DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Name and Title of Authorized Representative: ANN SILVERBERG WILLIAMSON, SECRETARY

Signature: *Ann Silverberg Williamson* Date: 5/17/04

STATE OF LOUISIANA

**CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING**  
certification for contracts, grants, loans,  
and cooperative agreements

Program: TITLE IV-B, SUBPARTS 1 and 2, CHAFEE FOSTER CARE  
INDEPENDENCE PROGRAM, and CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION & TREATMENT  
ACT  
Period: July 1, 2004 through June 30, 2005

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award document for subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly.

This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by Section 1352, Title 31, U. S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Organization Name: DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Name and Title of Authorized Representative: Ann Silverberg Williamson, SECRETARY

Signature: Ann Silverberg Williamson Date: 6/1/04

STATE OF LOUISIANA

CERTIFICATION REGARDING ENVIRONMENTAL TOBACCO SMOKE

Public Law 103-227, Part C - Environmental Tobacco Smoke, also known as the Pro-Children Act of 1994 (Act), requires that smoking not be permitted in any portion of any indoor routinely owned or leased or contracted for by an entity and used routinely or regularly for provision of health, day care, education, or library services to children under the age of 18, if the services are funded by Federal program either directly or through State or local governments, by Federal grant, contract, loan, or loan guarantee. The law does not apply to children's services provided in private residences, facilities funded solely by Medicare or Medicaid funds, and portions of facilities used for inpatient drug or alcohol treatment. Failure to comply with the provisions of the law may result in the imposition of a civil monetary penalty of up to \$1,000.00 per day and/or the imposition of an administrative compliance order on the responsible entity.

By signing and submitting this application the applicant/grantee certifies that it will comply with the requirements of the Act. The applicant/grantee further agrees that it will require the language of this certification be included in any sub-awards, which contain provisions for the children's services and that all sub-grantees shall certify accordingly.

Organization Name: DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Name and Title of Authorized Representative: Ann Silverberg Williamson, SECRETARY

Signature: *Ann Silverberg Williamson* Date: 6/17/04

# STATE OF LOUISIANA

## Child and Family Services Plan 2005 – 2009 Assurances/Certifications and State Officials' Signatures

### State Chief Executive Officer's Assurance Statement for The Child Abuse and Neglect State Plan

As Chief Executive Officer of the State of

Louisiana, I certify that the State has in effect and is enforcing a State law, or has in effect and is operating a Statewide program, relating to child abuse and neglect which includes:

1. provisions or procedures for reporting known or suspected instances of child abuse and neglect (section 106(b)(2)(A)(i));
2. policies and procedures (including appropriate referrals to child protection service systems and for other appropriate services) to address the needs of infants born and identified as affected by illegal substance abuse or withdrawal symptoms resulting from prenatal drug exposure, including a requirement that health care providers involved in the delivery or care of such infants notify the child protective services system of the occurrence of such condition in such infants (section 106(b)(2)(A)(ii));
3. the development of a plan of safe care for the infant born and identified as being affected by illegal substance abuse or withdrawal symptoms (section 106(b)(2)(A)(iii));
4. procedures for the immediate screening, risk and safety assessment, and prompt investigation of such reports (section 106(b)(2)(A)(iv));
5. triage procedures for the appropriate referral of a child not at risk of imminent harm to a community organization or voluntary preventive service (section 106(b)(2)(A)(v));
6. procedures for immediate steps to be taken to ensure and protect the safety of the abused or neglected child, and of any other child under the same care who may also be in danger of abuse or neglect; and ensuring their placement in a safe environment (section 106(b)(2)(A)(vi));
7. provisions for immunity from prosecution under State and local laws and regulations for individuals making good faith reports of suspected or known instances of child abuse or neglect (section 106(b)(2)(A)(vii));
8. methods to preserve the confidentiality of all records in order to protect the rights of the child and of the child's parents or guardians, including requirements ensuring that reports and records made and maintained pursuant to the purposes of CAPTA shall only be made available to--
  - a. individuals who are the subject of the report;
  - b. Federal, State, or local government entities, or any agent of such entities, as described in number 9 below;
  - c. child abuse citizen review panels;
  - d. child fatality review panels;
  - e. a grand jury or court, upon a finding that information in the record is necessary for the determination of an issue before the court or grand jury; and
  - f. other entities or classes of individuals statutorily authorized by the State to receive such information pursuant to a legitimate State purpose (section 106(b)(2)(A)(viii));
9. provisions to require a State to disclose confidential information to any Federal, State, or local government entity, or any agent of such entity, that has a need for such information in order to carry out its responsibility under law to protect children from abuse and neglect (section 106(b)(2)(A)(ix));
10. provisions which allow for public disclosure of the findings or information about the case of child abuse or neglect which has resulted in a child fatality or near fatality (section 106(b)(2)(A)(x));
11. the cooperation of State law enforcement officials, court of competent jurisdiction, and appropriate State agencies providing human services in the investigation, assessment, prosecution, and treatment of child abuse or neglect (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xi));

# STATE OF LOUISIANA

## Child and Family Services Plan 2005 – 2009 Assurances/Certifications and State Officials' Signatures

12. provisions requiring, and procedures in place that facilitate the prompt expungement of any records that are accessible to the general public or are used for purposes of employment or other background checks in cases determined to be unsubstantiated or false, except that nothing in this section shall prevent State child protective services agencies from keeping information on unsubstantiated reports in their casework files to assist in future risk and safety assessment (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xii));
13. provisions and procedures requiring that in every case involving an abused or neglected child which results in a judicial proceeding, a guardian ad litem, who has received training appropriate to the role, and who may be an attorney or a court appointed special advocate who has received training appropriate to that role (or both), shall be appointed to represent the child in such proceedings-
  - a. to obtain firsthand, a clear understanding of the situation and needs of the child; and
  - b. to make recommendations to the court concerning the best interests of the child (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xiii));
14. the establishment of citizen review panels in accordance with subsection 106(c) (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xiv));
15. provisions, procedures, and mechanisms -
  - a. for the expedited termination of parental rights in the case of any infant determined to be abandoned under State law; and
  - b. by which individuals who disagree with an official finding of abuse or neglect can appeal such finding (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xv));
16. provisions, procedures, and mechanisms that assure that the State does not require reunification of a surviving child with a parent who has been found by a court of competent jurisdiction—
  - a. to have committed a murder (which would have been an offense under section 1111(a) of title 18, United States Code, if the offense had occurred in the special maritime or territorial jurisdiction of the United States) of another child or such parent;
  - b. to have committed voluntary manslaughter (which would have been an offense under section 1112(a) of title 18, United States Code, if the offense had occurred in the special maritime or territorial jurisdiction of the United States) or another child or such parent;
  - c. to have aided or abetted, attempted, conspired, or solicited to commit such murder or voluntary manslaughter; or
  - d. to have committed a felony assault that results in the serious bodily injury to the surviving child or another child of such parent (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xvi));
17. provisions that assure that, upon the implementation by the State of the provisions, procedures, and mechanisms under number 16 above, conviction of any one of the felonies listed in number 16 above constitute grounds under State law for the termination of parental rights of the convicted parent as to the surviving children (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xvii));
18. provisions and procedures to require that a representative of the child protective services agency shall, at the initial time of contact with the individual subject to a child abuse and neglect investigation, advise the individual of the complaints or allegations made against the individual, in a manner that is consistent with laws protecting the rights of the reporter (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xviii));
19. provisions addressing the training of representatives of the child protective services system regarding the legal duties of the representatives, which may consist of various methods of informing such representatives of such duties, in order to protect the legal rights and safety of children and families from the initial time of contact during investigation through treatment (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xix));
20. provisions and procedures for improving the training, retention and supervision of caseworkers (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xx));
21. provisions and procedures for referral of a child under the age of 3 who is involved in a substantiated case of child abuse or neglect to early intervention services funded under part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xxi));

STATE OF LOUISIANA

Child and Family Services Plan 2005 – 2009 Assurances/Certifications and State Officials' Signatures

- 22. not later than June 25, 2005 (2 years after the enactment of Public Law 108-36), provisions and procedures for requiring criminal background checks for prospective foster and adoptive parents and other adult relatives and non-relatives residing in the household (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xxii));
- 23. procedures for responding to the reporting of medical neglect (including instances of withholding of medically indicated treatment from disabled infants with life-threatening conditions), procedures or programs, or both (within the State child protective services system), to provide for--
  - a. coordination and consultation with individuals designated by and within appropriate health care facilities;
  - b. prompt notification by individuals designated by and within appropriate health-care facilities of cases of suspected medical neglect (including instances of withholding of medically indicated treatment from disabled infants with life-threatening conditions); and
  - c. authority, under State law, for the State child protective services system to pursue any legal remedies, including the authority to initiate legal proceedings in a court of competent jurisdiction, as may be necessary to prevent the withholding of medically indicated treatment from disabled infants with life-threatening conditions (section 106(b)(2)(B)); and
- 24. authority under State law to permit the child protective services system of the State to pursue any legal remedies, including the authority to initiate legal proceedings in a court of competent jurisdiction, to provide medical care or treatment for a child when such care or treatment is necessary to prevent or remedy serious harm to the child, or to prevent the withholding of medically indicated treatments from disabled infants with life-threatening conditions (section 113).

Signature of Chief Executive Officer:

*Kathleen Babineaux Blanco*

Date: June 4, 2004

Reviewed by: Thurston Jones


(ACF Regional Representative)

Dated: January 3, 2005

STATE OF LOUISIANA

Child and Family Services Plan 2005 - 2009

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The seal of the State of Louisiana is a large, circular emblem in the background. It features an eagle with wings spread, perched on a globe. The eagle is surrounded by a wreath. The words "STATE OF LOUISIANA" are written in a circular path around the eagle. Below the eagle, the word "CONFIDENCE" is written in a curved path. At the bottom of the seal, there is a date "1804" and a small star.

**Section 3**  
**Child & Family Services Plan 2005 – 2009**  
**Program Improvement Plan**

State Of Louisiana  
**CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES REVIEW  
PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PLAN**



September 28, 2004



STATE OF LOUISIANA

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Appendix A: Program Improvement Plan Workgroup Participants

## Introduction

Federal Regulation 45CFR 1355 promulgated in January, 2000 in response to the provisions to the Social Security Act authorized the Department of Health and Human Services to review State child and family service programs in order to assure compliance with the State plan requirement of titles IV-B and IV-E of the Act. The Child and Family Service Reviews (CFSR) cover child protective services, foster care, adoption, family preservation, family support, and independent living services. Each review is a multiphase process designed to help individual states improve child welfare services and the outcomes for families and children by identifying the strengths and needs of the various programs administered by the state. Through the identification of a state's strengths and needs, the goals of improved outcomes and systemic changes are defined. From this, each state must develop a comprehensive Program Improvement Plan (PIP) designed to address each outcome and systemic factor identified as needing improvement. Systemic change must focus on the day to day practice, leadership, strategic planning, and continued commitment necessary to effect meaningful improvement for children and their families.

The Louisiana Department of Social Services through the Office of Community Services is the agency designated to administer the Title IV-B and IV-E programs. As such, in 2002 the agency implemented its plan in preparation for the Child and Family Service Review. Preparation began with a statewide assessment, followed by the Child and Family Services On Site Review held in September 2003. The development of this document, Louisiana's Program Improvement Plan, is based upon the findings of those review processes. While the next step in this process is the immediate implementation of the strategies and actions identified in this Program Improvement Plan, it is the ongoing implementation and review of the system and the support and commitment of resources necessary to effect lasting, meaningful change that will assure an effective quality service delivery system to the children and families of Louisiana.

## ***Statewide Assessment***

The Louisiana Statewide Assessment, published July 21, 2003, reflected a comprehensive assessment that examined the statewide network of children's and family services. This network includes services administered by the Department of Social Services, Office of Community Services and the services provided to the juvenile justice population through the Office of Youth Development. This first stage of the Child and Family Services Review process was multifaceted and sought to educate staff, clients, and stakeholders as to the Child and Family Services Review process, gather evaluative material on Louisiana's service delivery system, and seek input on strategies for improvement. This was accomplished through case reviews, interviews, focus groups, quality assurance data, and management reports from the statewide information systems, Tracking Information Payment System (TIPS) and Juvenile Information Records Management System (JIRMS). This comprehensive assessment identified strengths and needs within the system, provided an evaluation of performance on the six national indicators, and as required, identified the three geographic areas of the state which were to be the locations for the onsite review.

***Child And Family Services Review Process***

The Child and Family Service On Site Review sought information on how well Louisiana provides services based on an assessment conducted in three separate areas of the state. Federal guidelines require these reviews to be held in the largest metropolitan area of the state and in two other sites as determined during the statewide assessment process. The reviews were conducted September 8-12, 2003 in the New Orleans, St. Tammany and the Natchitoches-DeSoto parish areas and consisted of case record reviews, client and stakeholder interviews, and focus groups. The process sought to examine how well Louisiana achieves the outcomes of safety, permanence, and well being for children and families served, in addition to evaluating the capacity of Louisiana to achieve positive outcomes for children served by the child welfare system. Outcomes addressed include:

How well children are first and foremost protected from abuse and neglect;

How well children are safely maintained in their own homes whenever possible and appropriate;

The level of permanency and stability in the living situation of children;

How well is the continuity of family relationships and connections preserved;

Whether families have an enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs;

Whether children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs; and,

Whether children are receiving adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.

In addition to examining the State's level of achievement on the above identified outcome measures, the review also evaluated the following seven systemic factors:

The Statewide Information System

Case Review System

Quality Assurance System

Training

Service Array

# STATE OF LOUISIANA

## Child and Family Services Plan 2005-2009

## Section 3

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### Agency Responsiveness to the Community

#### Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

Finally, the State was evaluated on its' performance on the six outcome measures for which national standards are established. The national data indicators include:

Of all children who were victims of a substantiated or indicated maltreatment report in the first six months of calendar year 2001, what percent were victims of another substantiated or indicated report within a six month period?

National standard - 6.1% or less

Of all children who were in foster care in the first nine months of calendar year 2001, what percent experienced maltreatment from foster parents or facility staff members?

National standard - .57% or less

Of all children who entered foster care in fiscal year 2001, what percent were re-entering care within twelve months of a prior foster care episode?

National standard – 8.6% or less

Of all children reunified from foster care in fiscal year 2001, what percent were reunified within twelve months of entry into foster care?

National standard – 76.2% or more

Of all children who were adopted from foster care in fiscal year 2001, what percent were adopted within twenty-four months of their entry into foster care?

National standard – 32% or more

Of all children in foster care during fiscal year 2001 for less than twelve months, what percent experienced no more than two placement settings?

National standard – 86.7% or more

#### *CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES REVIEW FINDINGS*

In order to fully examine Louisiana's child welfare system, data from the statewide assessment, the Federal Child and Family Service On Site Review, and the State Data Profile on child welfare data from 1999 through 2001 were utilized to formulate a comprehensive review of the child welfare system in Louisiana. The results of the comprehensive review process were

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published in the Final Report, Louisiana Child and Family Services Review, February 5, 2004. The findings are based on ratings of substantial conformity or as areas needing improvement. In order to achieve a rating of substantial conformity on any of the seven major outcomes, the review process had to determine that at least 90% of the cases reviewed had achieved the outcome and for those outcomes with a related national data indicator, the national standard for that specific data indicator also had to be met.

Louisiana was found to be in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2; the continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children. This was accomplished having achieved a rating of 90% during the on site case review process. As stated in the Final Report, "OCS/DSS was found to make concerted efforts to ensure that children in foster care are placed, when appropriate, in close proximity to their parents or close relatives and with their siblings. DSS/OCS also was found to (1) promote frequent visitation between children in foster care and their parents and siblings, (2) preserve children's connections to their communities and extended families, (3) seek relatives as potential placement resources, and (4) support the bond between children and parents while children are in foster care."

The other six child welfare outcomes present opportunities for Louisiana to further examine its' practices, policies, and resources and develop strategies to improve services to children and their families. Louisiana received the following ratings for these six outcomes:

Safety Outcome 1: Children are first and foremost protected from abuse and neglect – 87.2%. This outcome examines the timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment and also takes into consideration two of the national data indicators addressing repeat maltreatment which are based on the state data profile. The data profile indicated that with a rating of 6.8%, Louisiana did not meet the national standard of 6.1% or less for the percentage of children experiencing more that one substantiated report of abuse/neglect within six months. Additionally, the national standard of .57 % or less for children maltreated while in foster care was not met.

Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible – 83.3%. This outcome focuses on the services provided to families to protect their children and prevent removal and services provided or efforts made to reduce the risk of harm to children.

Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations – 63.3%. This outcome takes into consideration four national data indicators based upon the state data profiles. Foster Care Re-entries examines the percentage of children who re-enter foster care within twelve months. With a rating of 7.8%, Louisiana met the national standard of 8.6% or less. The next standard, Length of Time to Achieve Reunification presents an opportunity for Louisiana to work toward reducing the amount of time needed to safely reunify children with their families. Louisiana received a rating of 65% with the national standard at 76.2%. Length of Time to Achieve Adoption is the next standard. This national data indicator examines how quickly adoptions are finalized by looking at all children adopted and determining the percentage who were adopted within twenty-four months of their entry

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into foster care. This indicator presents Louisiana with a significant rating of nonconformity, receiving a rating of 11.6% against the national standard of 32.0% or more. The fourth national data indicator addressing permanency issues looks at the stability of foster care placements by calculating the percentage of children in foster care for twelve months or less who experienced no more than two placement settings. Louisiana at 83.3% did not meet the national standard (86.7% or more).

Well Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs – 68%. This outcome examines whether the State has adequately assessed the needs of children, parents, and foster parents and provided services necessary to meet those needs. It also focuses on efforts to involve children and families in the case planning process, the frequency and quality of worker and child visitation and worker and parent visitation.

Well Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs – 78%. This outcome addresses whether children's educational needs are adequately assessed and appropriate services provided.

Well Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs – 72.9%. While the assessment and provision of services related to children's physical health needs was found to be a strength in Louisiana, it was determined that children's mental health needs were not consistently being met, particularly as related to difficulty in accessing services, delays in psychiatric evaluations, poor quality psychiatric evaluations, and inadequate on-going assessments and services.

In examination of the seven systemic factors, Louisiana was found to be in substantial conformity with all seven factors. Twenty-two items comprised these seven systemic factors, with nineteen items rated as strengths and only three areas rated needing improvement.

During development and negotiation of the Program Improvement Plan (May 2004), it was mutually agreed upon, that since more recent data had become available since the 2001 Data Profiles utilized in the state's CFSR, the more recent data, the 2003 Data Profiles would be utilized for the five outcome measures not meeting established national standards. Those revised date profiles reflect the re-established baselines as follows:

Of all children who were reunified with their parents or caretakers at the time of discharge from foster care, what percentage was reunified in less than twelve months from the time of the latest removal from home?

Standard – 76.2% or more; Louisiana baseline – 68.5%.

Of all children who exited care to a finalized adoption, what percentage exited care in less than twenty-four months from the time of the latest removal from home?

Standard – 32% or more; Louisiana baseline – 18.9%.

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Of all children served who have been in foster care less than twelve months from the time of the latest removal from home, what percentage have had no more than two placement settings?

Standard – 86.7% or more; Louisiana baseline – 80.9%

Recurrence of Maltreatment: Of all children associated with a “substantiated,” “indicated,” or “alternative response victim” finding of maltreatment during the first six months of the reporting period, what percentage had another “substantiate,” “indicated,” or “alternative response victim” finding of maltreatment within a six-month period.

Standard – 6.1% or less; Louisiana baseline – 8.7%

Incidence of Child Abuse and/or Neglect in Foster Care: Of all children who were served in foster care during the reporting period, what percentage were found to be victims of maltreatment. A child is counted as having been maltreated in foster care if the perpetrator of the maltreatment was identified as a foster parent or residential facility staff.

Standard - .57% or less; Louisiana baseline – 1.78%



**PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PLAN DEVELOPMENT**

The Child and Family Services Review serves as an assessment of Louisiana's child welfare system, identifying strengths and needs of the entire service delivery system within the state. The Program Improvement Plan seeks to address those areas of the system wherein lie opportunities for improved service delivery and increased safety, permanence, and well-being of children. While the Department of Social Services, Office of Community Services (DSS/OCS) has been designated to develop the Program Improvement Plan, it is intended to be a plan of improvement for the entire state, not individual agencies or programs.

The message of commitment to systemic improvement resonated throughout the Child and Family Services Review process with the involvement, collaboration, and participation of local/community stakeholders; parish, regional and state child welfare and juvenile justice system staff; representatives from the judicial system; tribal representatives; and many others. It was deemed absolutely critical that in order for positive changes to occur, all stakeholders had to be involved in the development of the Program Improvement Plan. Stakeholders were included in workgroup meetings (Safety, Permanence, Continuity and Relationships, and Well Being), on the Program Improvement Plan Steering Committee, in collaboration via teleconferences and consultations, and in review and request for comments of the proposed plan. A list of stakeholders and participants is included in Appendix B.

The development of the Program Improvement Plan was an extensive and comprehensive process involving over eighty participants and over forty committee meetings. Four workgroups were charged with the responsibility of developing strategies that included measurable goals of improvement, action steps, and timeframes to address each outcome found not to be in substantial conformity. More specifically, the workgroups addressed each item, as well as the statewide aggregate data that contributed to the nonconformity of each outcome. While some identified strategies and action steps unique to specific outcomes, it was readily apparent that each workgroup identified issues that are overarching and could not be easily addressed within or by any one workgroup.

During the course of their examination of issues related to the child welfare service delivery system and subsequent strategies for improvement, each workgroup was faced with issues focusing on workload, staffing needs, and technological resources. While most action steps included within the Program Improvement Plan focus on practice and policy issues, the need for additional qualified staff and/or improved resources arose in relation to each and every outcome. It is noteworthy to mention that each workgroup found these issues to be critical to the achievement of any sustainable degree of success. Due to the magnitude of these issues and the budgetary considerations involved, it was determined that system wide goals, strategies and action steps would be developed and incorporated into Louisiana's FFY 2005-2009 Child and Family Services Plan. As in all program areas, these system wide goals will address identified multiple concerns and seek improvements needed to enhance performance of staff.

As action steps and benchmarks were developed, it was also necessary for the workgroups to identify and examine existing reports, instruments and reviews that would serve as methods of

measure for each activity. For many strategies, in order to monitor progress in an accurate and timely manner, new methods of measure are being developed. The three major methods of measure utilized in this Program Improvement Plan are the use of the Peer Case Review Process (PCR), Quality Assurance System (QA), and the Tracking Information Payment System (TIPS).

**Peer Case Review (PCR):** During preparation for accreditation by the Council on Accreditation, Louisiana developed a comprehensive Peer Case Review system as part of its' Continuous Quality Improvement process. While the process previously in existence assisted in identifying many of the strengths and opportunities for improvement within the system, it was recognized that the internal Peer Case Review process would be more effective if it were to more closely align with the federal process. Louisiana modified its' Peer Case Review process that is now comprised of on-site peer reviews, which include case record reviews, focus groups and data reviews. The Peer Case Review instrument addresses those specific items included in the Program Improvement Plan, mirroring the questions and areas examined in the federal CFSR Case Review instrument.

The Peer Case Review process is comprised of an annual onsite visit to each of the ten regions. Reviewers are peer caseworkers, supervisors, management staff, and stakeholders. Within each region a sample of thirty cases is pulled, including nine foster care cases, three child protection investigation cases, nine in-home family services cases, and nine adoption cases. This results in three hundred cases reviewed annually across the state. Within each region a focus group is held with one of the following stakeholder groups: foster/adoptive parents, biological parents, law enforcement, legal system, children ages 9-13 years, youth ages 13-18 years, child advocates, mental health, educational, medical providers, DSS/OCS staff, and administrative review bodies. Each region selects a different group annually.

This revised Peer Case Review process will help to avoid multiple review processes that unnecessarily and negatively impact staff time and will also provide uniformity in reviewing data that more closely addresses the outcomes and standards as determined by the Administration for Children and Families.

**Quality Assurance (QA):** The second primary method of measure utilized by Louisiana to monitor progress is its' quality assurance system. With this review process, data is gathered in a consistent manner, on a monthly basis, providing accurate and reliable information on which to assess improvement. The quality assurance system includes a case record review of a sampling of cases within each program in every region of the state. The quality assurance system has the capacity to generate parish-level, regional office-level and statewide aggregate data reports.

The sample represents a review of:

10% of child protection investigation cases;

100% of foster care cases for ASFA protections;

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25% of foster care cases for OCS policy compliance; and

8 to 9% of in home family services cases.

**Tracking Information Payment System (TIPS):** TIPS will be utilized as a method of measure for some items. The system provides aggregate data, which will be validated with the Louisiana Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) official semi-annual reports. Any determination as to whether or not the goals associated with the statewide aggregate data and the national standards has been achieved will be based on results derived using the same methodology and parameters ACF utilizes in generating the statewide aggregate data indicators found in a State's data profile.

**Use of PCR and QA for Achievement Measurement:** The agency will receive comprehensive and accurate data for measuring progress on achievement of PIP action steps and goals using the PCR and QA case review processes. Any determination as to whether or not the goals associated with the cases reviewed utilizing these processes has been achieved will be based on three consecutive months (quarterly) of statewide aggregate case review findings for the relevant items.

**DSS/OCS Reporting to ACF Regional Office:** During the PIP, DSS/OCS will submit quarterly progress reports to the Administration for Children and Families Region VI Office. The reports are due not later than forty-five (45) days after the end of each quarter. The Planning and Accreditation Section Administrator will coordinate the preparation and submittal of such reports. The DSS/OCS Program Division Director will serve as the Louisiana PIP Implementation Lead during the PIP period.

The collaborative effort, investment and commitment of stakeholders and individuals concerned about the children of Louisiana has resulted in a comprehensive, outcome oriented approach addressing the needs of Louisiana's child welfare system with the goal of improving the quality of services provided to children and their families. It is felt that implementation of this plan, foremost, will have a positive impact on the child welfare service delivery system and its clients. Secondly, implementation will support the achievement of the federally established outcomes and standards, thereby avoiding the potential for significant financial penalty to the State of Louisiana and further reduction of the revenue available to support this most vulnerable population.

In submitting this document, the State of Louisiana commits to supporting the goals of this plan, continuing the collaborative efforts among stakeholders, and advocating for the support and resources necessary to assure adequate and quality services for the children and families in Louisiana.

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Ann Silverberg Williamson, Secretary  
State of Louisiana  
Department of Social Services

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Date

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**OUTCOMES, ITEMS, GOALS AND ACTION STEPS**

*Safety*

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Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.

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Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment.

CFSR Case Review Finding (Baseline): 69%  
Louisiana Data Annual Goal: 70%  
Louisiana PIP Data Goal: 70.5%  
Achievement Date: 7<sup>th</sup> Quarter  
Method Of Measure: Quality Assurance and Peer Case Review Data

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The State of Louisiana's CFSR reviewed sixteen applicable cases, measuring performance of investigation timeliness at 69%. In order to improve performance in this area, several action steps are proposed to concentrate on the collection and distribution of data to first line staff to assist in regional corrective action planning including data on timely initial contact, case closure within sixty days and cases open over six months. In order to clear out the backlog of cases, a monthly report will be sent to each region with a parish-by-parish breakdown of cases open over six months and a quarterly report on case closure within sixty days will be submitted to each region. A monthly report will be developed and submitted to first line staff providing a monthly tracking of initiation of investigations within the policy prescribed time frame. The rationale behind the development of these three reports and the tracking procedure for monitoring compliance is that by clearing up the backlog of cases in the child protection program, staff time will be freed up to initiate investigations in a timelier manner. However, based on preliminary assessment, it appears that as backlogged cases are cleared, the resulting rate of timeliness may actually fall below the baseline. For that reason, it is estimated that the rate of improvement as measured from the CFSR baseline will not appear as a significant increase.

In order to streamline documentation and, thereby, increase the availability of staff to respond timely on new cases, a paperwork reduction project has been initiated and will continue with the goal of statewide implementation of an improved method of documentation. It is anticipated that this will free up worker time to initiate and complete investigations in a more timely manner, increasing the state's compliance on this outcome.

Additionally, quality of intake practice is perceived as a barrier to timeliness of investigation initiation. In order to address deficits in practice, agency policy, practice and training focused on intake will be reviewed and revised. The methods of measurement used to determine the level of improvement will be the ongoing quality assurance reviews and the annual peer case reviews in each region.

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Finally, staff issues will be studied to enhance child protection practice as it relates to timely initial contact. As in all program areas, the agency will address the identified concerns and seek improvements needed to enhance the performance of staff.

Action Step 1: Reduce the paper work demands for CPI staff.

<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Achievement Date</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Measure</b>
1. Convene paperwork reduction workgroup.	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	CPI/FS Section Administrator	Workgroup Report
2. Develop evaluative measures of paperwork reduction workgroup product.	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	CPI/FS Section Administrator	Evaluation Report
3. Select 3 pilot sites.	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	CPI/FS Section Administrator	Workgroup Report
4. Conduct staff training in the pilot sites.	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	CPI/FS Section Administrator	Training Curriculum Training Report
5. Implement paperwork reduction pilot in three designated sites.	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	CPI/FS Section Administrator	Memo
6. Evaluate pilot effectiveness and interface with ACESS.	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter	CPI/FS Section Administrator	Evaluation Summary
7. Implement statewide if evaluation demonstrates effectiveness and ACESS compatibility in pilot sites.	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter	CPI/FS Section Administrator	Policy

Action Step 2: Develop an oversight and tracking system for initial contact to provide feedback on timeliness of investigation initiation.

<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Achievement Date</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Measure</b>
1. Work with DSS Information Technology to develop a report that provides information on response time compliance policy concerning time limits on emergency, high priority and non-emergency cases.	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	CW Quality Assurance and Research Section Administrator	Report
2. Provide monthly response time reports to Regional Administrators by region, parish and worker.	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter	DSS TIPS Customer Relations Manager	Report Distribution Log
3. Each region below the state performance standard of 85% will develop a corrective action plan within 60 days to improve the rate of timely contact.	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Regional Administrator	Corrective Action Plans
4. Evaluate effectiveness of corrective action plans.	6 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Regional Administrator	Report

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Action Step 3: Seek funds and positions to establish the intake program in support of emerging integrated service delivery and to support implementation of new CAPTA regulations.

<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Achievement Date</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Measure</b>
1. Submit CAPTA compliance assurances.	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	Planning & Accreditation Section Administrator	State Plan
2. Submit request through budgetary process.	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	Assistant Secretary	Budget Request
3. Upon receipt of appropriations for this purpose, establish positions.	5 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Field Services Division Director	Budget Appropriation
4. Train staff and implement program.	7 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Field Services Division Director	Policy Training Report

Action Step 4: Strengthen practice and policy related to the intake process.

<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Achievement Date</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Measure</b>
1. Assess need and available staffing resources for intake positions.	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	Field Services Division Director	Staff Utilization Report
2. Research and identify methods to improve the intake process.	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	CPI/FS Section Administrator	Report
3. Review and revise policy as necessary to improve intake process.	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter	Policy Section Administrator	Policy
4. Implement new intake process.	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter	CPI/FS Section Administrator	Training Report
5. Evaluate implementation of new intake process.	6 <sup>th</sup> quarter	CPI/FS Section Administrator	Evaluation Report
6. Enhance professional skills in performing intake functions by providing training in the areas of safety and interviewing.	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Training Section Administrator	Training Report

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Action Step 5: Develop monitoring process for case closure within 60 days.

<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Achievement Date</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Measure</b>
1. Develop and implement a tracking procedure of the percentage of cases closed within 60 days of CPI open date.	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	CW Quality Assurance and Research Section Administrator	Tracking Report
2. Provide a monthly report by region, parish and worker to regional administrators of the cases not closed within 60 days.	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	CW Quality Assurance and Research Section Administrator	Report Distribution Log
3. Each region below the state performance standard of 85% will develop a corrective action plan.	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter.	Regional Administrators	Corrective Action Plans
4. Evaluate effectiveness of corrective action plans.	6 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Regional Administrator	Report

Action Step 6: Develop a monitoring process for cases open over 6 months.

<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Achievement Date</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Measure</b>
1. Develop and implement a tracking procedure of cases open over six months.	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	CW Quality Assurance and Research Section Administrator	Tracking Report
2. Provide monthly reports by region, parish, and worker to regional administrators of the number of cases open over six months.	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	CW Quality Assurance and Research Section Administrator	Report Distribution Log
3. Each region with over 50 cases open over 6 months will develop a corrective action plan with staff to reduce the number of cases in their caseload open over 6 months.	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter	Regional Administrators	Corrective Action Plans
4. Evaluate effectiveness of corrective action plans.	6 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Regional Administrator	Report

Item 2a: Repeat maltreatment (Recurrence)

CFSR Case Review Finding: 94%

Data Profile (Baseline): 8.7% (2003)

Louisiana Data Annual Goal: 8.3%

Louisiana PIP Data Goal: 7.8%

Achievement Date: 7<sup>th</sup> Quarter

Method Of Measure: Tracking Information Payment System (TIPS) Quarterly Report and NCANDS Data

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Repeat maltreatment was rated as a strength in 94% of the cases reviewed during the CFSR on site review. Forty-seven of the fifty cases were applicable to this item. On the data indicator, recurrence of maltreatment, "Of all children who were victims of a substantiated or indicated maltreatment report in the first six months of calendar year 2003, what percent were victims of another substantiated or indicated report within a 6 month period," the national standard for this outcome is 6.1% or less. Louisiana did not meet this standard with the 2001 data and will utilize 2003 data to establish a new baseline of 8.7%.

In order to reduce the rate of maltreatment recurrence, Louisiana will undertake three action steps. A report will be developed to identify characteristics of cases in which recurrence occurs and will be utilized in developing strategies to reduce the maltreatment rate. The State will seek additional funding to expand promising practices such as Family Group Decision Making and Project LASAFE, in order to improve the effectiveness of its interventions in child welfare cases. Thirdly, the agency has proposed legislative change to the Children's Code, which will allow child welfare staff access to invalid child protection reports. This will enhance staff's ability to conduct risk assessments and plan more effective family interventions.



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Action Step 1: Generate reports that provide demographic and geographic data on repeat maltreatment to identify trends and target populations, and develop and implement an intervention protocol with families at risk of repeat maltreatment.

<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Achievement Date</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Measure</b>
1. Define cases at risk for repeat maltreatment through the use of technical assistance from NCANDS team on Louisiana NCANDS data file and DSS/OCS analysis of state data.	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	Child Welfare Quality Assurance and Research Section Administrator	Reports
2. Define reports for potential repeat maltreatment cases.	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	Child Welfare Quality Assurance and Research Section Administrator	Report
3. Develop screening protocol for potential repeat maltreatment cases.	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	CPI/FS Section Administrator	Screening Protocol
4. Conduct review of new screening protocol with supervisory staff.	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter	CPI District Supervisors	Review Report
5. Implement screening protocol for identification of families at risk of repeat maltreatment.	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter	CPI/FS Section Administrator	Screening Protocol
6. Develop and disseminate guide for use by supervisors in development of intervention protocol.	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter	CPI/FS Section Administrator	Supervisory Guide
7. Conduct review of new guide with supervisory staff.	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter	CPI District Supervisors	Review Report
8. Develop and implement intervention protocol for families identified at risk of repeat maltreatment.	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Supervisors	Quality Assurance Peer Case Review
9. Evaluate effectiveness of intervention protocol on reducing repeat maltreatment.	7 <sup>th</sup> quarter	CPI/FS Section Administrator	Data Reports
10. Submit data, reports, and recommendations in support of request for additional funding as needed to expand existing or implement new interventions to support protocol.	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter	CPI/FS Section Administrator	Budget Support Report
11. Submit request for additional funds to legislature to expand effective programs and projects such as Family Group Decision Making and Project LASAFE.	6 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Assistant Secretary	Budget Request

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Action Step 2: Propose legislation changing the Louisiana Children’s Code to allow access to invalid reports to aid more comprehensive assessment.

<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Achievement Date</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Measure</b>
1. Draft legislation for introduction during legislative session.	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	DSS Bureau of General Counsel	Proposed Legislation
2. Upon passage of legislation, draft and implement policy authorizing maintenance, access and intake screening procedures for prior invalid reports.	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	Policy Section Administrator	Policy
3. Evaluate compliance with revised policy and effectiveness in reducing repeat maltreatment.	6 <sup>th</sup> quarter	CPI Section Administrator	Quality Assurance Peer Case Review

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### Item 2b: Repeat Maltreatment (Maltreatment of children in foster care)

Data Profile (Baseline): 1.78% (2003 Data)

Louisiana Data Annual Goal: 1.71%

Louisiana PIP Data Goal: 1.64%

Achievement Date: 7<sup>th</sup> Quarter

Method Of Measure: Tracking Information Payment System (TIPS) Quarterly Report, NCANDS and AFCARS Data

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At the time of Louisiana's CFSR Final Report, utilizing 2001 data, Louisiana received a rating of .58% on this outcome measure for which the national standard is .57% or less. During review of this data, it was determined that the Louisiana incidence of maltreatment in foster care was higher than reported by the data set sent to the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS). The cause for under reporting lies with the 20-year old mainframe system in which the links to/from child to perpetrator relationships are in non-mandatory fields which cannot be changed to mandatory. These links are problematic and confusing for field staff. In response to this problem, Louisiana developed an alternate approach that resulted in a more accurate data set of the children who are maltreated while in foster care. In consultation with the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Children's Bureau and Walter R. McDonald, Inc., it was agreed to use the alternate data to set the baseline for the PIP. Louisiana will utilize technical assistance from Walter R. McDonald, Inc. to improve the NCANDS dataset for this variable. If the two data sets are synchronized by the end of the first PIP year, then the NCANDS federal fiscal year 2004 and 2005 submissions will be used to measure the progress on the PIP. If the two datasets are not synchronized, then the NCANDS federal fiscal year 2004 submission will be used to set the baseline and Louisiana will only have to improve by one half of the sampling error by the end of the PIP.

Subsequent to issuance of Louisiana's CFSR Final Report, it was decided to utilize the most current data available to establish more accurate baselines. With the establishment of the new baseline (1.78%), action steps to improve performance will focus on multiple areas. The agency can be more effective in determining that a child is being abused or neglected or at risk of neglect or abuse by developing tools and training staff to better communicate with foster children. Training of agency and residential care staff, skill building of staff to conduct comprehensive assessments of foster children to include focus on safety and risk of abuse and/or neglect, and examination of ways to increase out-of-home care resources will improve the practice and provide adequate resources and supports to achieve reduction of maltreatment in foster care.

It was also determined that a lack of communication and understanding of each other's roles as foster parents and agency staff contributed to staff's lack of knowledge of the child's care in the home and inability to provide helpful services to prevent abuse and neglect by the foster parents. Many foster children present very challenging behaviors to foster parents and training of staff and foster parents to deal with these behaviors would be helpful in preventing abuse

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and neglect. Soliciting information on training needs from foster parents and the four federally-recognized tribes will further enhance communication between parties.

A lack of appropriate foster homes results in overcrowding and overuse of existing homes that can then result in the maltreatment of foster children. By improving retention of existing homes and recruiting more homes, the pool of available choices for children would expand, reducing the stress on long serving foster parents. Strategies are identified for recruiting, supporting and retaining qualified foster families.

A significant percentage of abuse and neglect of foster children occurs in residential treatment settings. Increasing funding for these facilities and improving the skills of the providers through training would be helpful. Additionally, better training for child protection staff investigating reports within residential treatment settings would also increase the safety and reduce the risk of harm for children in these placements.

Action Step 1: Expand initial and ongoing assessment of children’s risk of abuse/neglect in foster care placements.

<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Achievement Date</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Measure</b>
1. Modify Foster Parent Reassessment and Evaluation Form 604 to include safety concerns presented by the child.	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	Policy Section Administrator	Form 604
2. Access technical assistance and consultation from national resource center to develop assessment of risk of harm to children in foster care placements.	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	Foster Care Section Administrator	Technical Assistance
3. Administer survey developed through collaboration with Louisiana State University that includes focus on safety issues and concerns.	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter	LSU School of Social Work	Survey Report
4. Develop a procedure to assess risk of harm to children in foster care at the time of initial placement and on an ongoing basis.	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Foster Care Section Administrator	Policy Risk Assessment
5. Train 50% of staff on new procedure and implement risk of harm assessment process.	5 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Training Section Administrator	Training Report
6. Train 100% of staff on new procedure and implement risk of harm assessment process.	6 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Training Section Administrator	Training Report
7. Evaluate effectiveness of risk assessment and use of form 604 in assessing risk of abuse/neglect for children in foster care.	7 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Foster Care Section Administrator	Quality Assurance Peer Case Review

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Action Step 2: Conduct joint in-service training for caseworkers, foster parents, and social service directors from the four federally-recognized American Indian tribes to promote safety of children in foster care.

Benchmarks	Projected Achievement Date	Lead	Measure
1. Invite and encourage foster parents and social service directors from the four federally-recognized tribes to participate in adoption exchange meetings with foster/adoptive parents, staff, and private adoption agencies.	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	Adoption Section Administrator	Invitation
2. Develop procedures to solicit input on training needs and safety concerns from foster parents and representatives from the four federally-recognized American Indian tribes.	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	Foster Care Section Administrator	Procedures
3. Conduct training for staff, foster parents and representatives from the four federally-recognized American Indian tribes in 50% of state regions on parenting challenging children and reducing risk of harm to children in foster care.	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter	Training Section Administrator	Training Curriculum Training Report
4. Conduct training for staff, foster parents and representatives from the four federally-recognized American Indian tribes in 100% of state regions on parenting challenging children and reducing risk of harm to children in foster care.	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Training Section Administrator	Training Curriculum Training Report
5. Evaluate effectiveness of training in increasing safety of children in foster care.	5 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Foster Care Section Administrator	Training Evaluations Peer Case Review

Action Step 3: Increase capacity in services continuum of out of home care resources.

Benchmarks	Projected Achievement Date	Lead	Measure
1. Request additional funding for retention of qualified foster families by providing increased foster care board payments utilizing the urban south regional average for a medium family income.	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	Assistant Secretary	Budget Request
2. Request increased funding for recruitment and retention of appropriately qualified staff in restrictive care facilities.	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	Assistant Secretary	Budget Request
3. Implement increased rate of payment to providers.	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	Residential and Private Foster Care Section Administrator	Policy

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<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Achievement Date</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Measure</b>
4. Utilize technical assistance from the national resource centers to assess residential treatment resource needs and develop strategic plan to enhance provider skills.	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter	Residential and Private Foster Care Section Administrator	Technical Assistance Strategic Plan
5. Implement strategies and evaluate effectiveness in increasing provider skill levels.	5 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Residential and Private Foster Care Section Administrator	Evaluations
6. Train staff on the use of faith based recruitment efforts to expand pool of foster/adoptive parents.	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	Foster Care/Adoption Section Administrators	Conference Training Agenda
7. Implement faith based training initiatives to expand pool of foster/adoptive parents.	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	Foster Care/Adoption Section Administrators	Policy Quality Assurance
8. Evaluate effectiveness of faith based initiatives in increasing foster/adoptive applicants.	7 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Foster Care/Adoption Section Administrators	Provider Enrollment Report

Action Step 4: Collaborate with residential facilities to reduce maltreatment in restrictive care.

<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Achievement Date</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Measure</b>
1. Develop data collection process and collect demographic and geographic reports on repeat maltreatment to identify trends and target populations.	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	Child Welfare Quality Assurance and Research Section Administrator	TIPS reports
2. Based upon review of data, assess training and technical assistance needs of CPI and residential staff.	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Residential and Private Foster Care Section Administrator	Needs Assessment
3. Develop and implement training and technical assistance as needed.	5 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Residential and Private Foster Care Section Administrator	Training Curriculum Training Report
4. Evaluate effectiveness of training in meeting needs of staff and in reducing maltreatment.	7 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Residential and Private Foster Care Section Administrator	Quality Assurance Peer Case Review Training Evaluations

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Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.

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Item 3: Services to family to protect child(ren) in home and prevent removal.

CFSR Case Review Finding (Baseline): 79%

Louisiana Data Annual Goal: 81%

Louisiana PIP Data Goal: 84%

Achievement Date: 7th Quarter

Method Of Measure: Peer Cases Review and  
Quality Assurance Data

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The State of Louisiana's CFSR measured performance on services to prevent removal in twenty-eight of the fifty cases reviewed. In 79% of these applicable cases, services were provided to prevent removal, and/or the children were appropriately removed to ensure their safety, and/or services were provided while children were placed with a relative, and/or services were provided after reunification to prevent re-entry into foster care. In order to improve performance in this area there are four action steps that will be undertaken. Additionally, a review of policy and procedures to assess and increase, as appropriate, the involvement of non-custodial parents in Child Protection Investigation and in-home Family Service cases will be initiated. This will also require the enhancement of staff skills in dealing with cases involving domestic violence, substance abuse and/or parental mental health issues including strengthening comprehensive assessments in Family Services cases.

The agency will also initiate collaborative efforts with the Office of Public Health (OPH) to utilize nursing support services to families identified at risk of removal. The final strategies to be implemented will involve an assessment of services provided by the Family Resource Centers in Louisiana to determine their effectiveness in meeting client service needs. Based upon this finding, modifications to the menu of services being provided by the Resource Centers or method of delivery of these services will be implemented.

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Action Step 1: Enhance clinical knowledge of staff pertaining to risk and safety screening of substance abuse, mental health, and domestic violence.

Benchmarks	Projected Achievement Date	Lead	Measure
1. Develop Substance Abuse, Mental Health, and Domestic Violence curriculum in collaboration with community experts and/or national resource centers.	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	CPI/FS Section Administrator	Technical Assistance Training Curriculums Policy
2. Review and revise policy and training curriculums with the assistance of national resource centers to include screening of substance abuse, mental health issues, and domestic violence as they pertain to risk and safety of children in their own homes.	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	CPI/FS Section Administrator	Policy Training Curriculum Revisions Technical Assistance
3. Train staff on inclusion of Domestic Violence, Mental Health, and Substance Abuse issues in safety and risk assessment process.	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Field Services Division Director	Training Report
4. Evaluate staffs' increased knowledge of the role of mental health, domestic violence, and substance issues in safety and risk assessments, as evidenced by compliance with new policy and more comprehensive assessments.	6 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Training Section Administrator	Training Evaluation

Action Step 2: Develop a workgroup comprised of agency and state resource center staff to address effectiveness/accessibility of Louisiana family resource centers.

Benchmarks	Projected Achievement Date	Lead	Measure
1. Convene workgroup to evaluate services provided through the Louisiana Family Resource Centers.	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	Field Services Liaison Section Administrator	Meeting Notes/Report
2. Provide recommendations to improve services available to families through the Louisiana Family Resource Centers to prevent removal and protect children in their own homes.	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	Field Services Liaison Section Administrator	Report
3. Implement approved workgroup recommendations through modifications to service menu of Louisiana Family Resource Centers.	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter	Field Services Liaison Section Administrator	Contract Revisions and/or Resource Center Brochure
4. Evaluate use of additional services by families.	7 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Field Services Liaison Section Administrator	Contract Monitoring Report



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Action Step 3: Strengthen policy and practice on the use of comprehensive assessments throughout the life of a case designed to reduce risk and increase safety.

<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Achievement Date</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Measure</b>
1. Incorporate the safety assessment concepts, form, instructions, policy and protocol into the agency training for new workers.	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	Training Section Administrator	Basic Training Curriculum
2. Develop an assessment tool in consultation with a national resource center for use in the risk assessment, case decision-making process, and development of service plans.	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter	Foster Care Section Administrator	Risk Assessment Instrument Technical Assistance
3. Training of staff and implementation of the risk assessment tool, policy, and practice guidelines.	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Training Section Administrator	Training Report Policy
4. Evaluate compliance on use of risk assessment tool and its effectiveness in reducing risk and increasing safety to children.	7 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Foster Care Section Administrator	Quality Assurance Peer Case Review

Action Step 4: Provide a more comprehensive assessment and service delivery through inclusion of nursing support services.

<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Achievement Date</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Measure</b>
1. Initiate interagency meetings with Office of Public Health (OPH) to develop strategies to improve assessments and/or service delivery to clients in need of nursing support services.	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	CPI/FS Section Administrator	Strategies
2. Develop Memorandum of Understanding with OPH addressing collaborative efforts of DSS/OCS and OPH staff to provide services to children and families at risk.	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter	CPI/FS Section Administrator	Memorandum of Understanding
3. Develop policy to utilize Office of Public Health for nursing support services in families with medical needs.	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Policy Section Administrator	Policy
4. Train staff in 50% of regions on nursing support services.	5 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Field Services Division Director	Training Report
5. Train staff in 100% of regions on nursing support services.	6 <sup>th</sup> quarter	CPI/FS Section Administrator	Training Report
6. Implement policy utilizing nursing support services.	6 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Field Services Division Director	Peer Case Review
7. Evaluate use of and effectiveness of nursing services in preventing removal.	7 <sup>th</sup> quarter	CPI/FS Section Administrator	Evaluation Report

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### *PERMANENCY*

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Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situation.

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Item 6: Stability of foster care placement.

CFSR Case Review Finding (Baseline): 90%  
Data Profile (Baseline): 80.9% (National Standard 86.7%)  
Louisiana Data Annual Goal: 82%  
Louisiana PIP Data Goal: 85%  
Achievement Date: 7<sup>th</sup> quarter  
Method Of Measure: Tracking Information Payment System (TIPS) Quarterly Report and AFCARS Data

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Stability of foster care placements was determined to be an area needing improvement in the Federal Review. All thirty foster care cases were applicable for this item and in 90% of those cases reviewed, children's placement stability was ensured. Data from the 2001 Data Profile found that only 83.3% of the cases met the national standard of 86.7% or more. Data from 2003 indicates there was a reduction in the stability of placements, with 80.9% of children experiencing no more than two placements in their first twelve months in foster care. Louisiana will utilize the most recent data available in establishing the baseline for this item. The problems that require attention in order to improve this issue are strengthening support to foster/adoptive families and improving internal communication in the agency.

There is an ongoing need to provide supportive services to certified foster families as the success of child welfare depends greatly on stable foster care placements. The agency plans to identify supportive models for foster parents by working with a national resource center. From this collaboration, training for certified families and DSS/OCS staff will be provided to focus on strengthening communication and skill development. Currently, the regional foster/adoptive resource centers offer a variety of supportive services, but all foster/adoptive families do not take advantage of the services, as they are not aware of them. The centers will develop brochures advertising services and DSS/OCS staff will distribute them to all certified families. Through use of the national and local resource centers, foster parents can obtain more supportive services and, as a result, placements should become more stable.

The agency has consulted with a national resource center to develop a Resource Family Home System. Efforts are being made to develop a procedure to move this initiative forward. This system will work to better prepare foster/adoptive parents to understand the permanency process and will dually certify all homes for foster care and adoption so that when a child becomes available for adoption, the goal can be achieved timely and not delayed waiting on

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adoption certification. This action will also assist in improving Item 9, Adoption within twenty-four months.

Action Step 1: Increase support to foster parents.

<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Achievement Date</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Measure</b>
1. Each Child Welfare Family Resource Center and Foster/Adoptive Resource Center will develop a brochure outlining services and DSS/OCS staff will provide to foster/adoptive parents and document distribution.	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	Field Services Liaison Section Administrator	Brochures
2. Create and circulate to all staff policy regarding regional protocols to communicate information regarding certified homes.	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	Policy Section Administrator	Policy
3. Develop training package in consultation with a national resource center for foster parents and DSS/OCS staff to focus on strengthening partnership through communication techniques and support to reduce unplanned disruptions.	5 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Training Section Administrator	Training Curriculum Technical Assistance
4. Implement training statewide.	7 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Training Section Administrator	Training Report

Action Step 2: Develop and implement a Resource Family Home System.

<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Achievement Date</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Measure</b>
1. Develop a Resource Family Home System and related policies and procedures.	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	FC Section Administrator	Policy
2. Conduct training for home development staff and implement statewide.	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter	FC Section Administrator	Training Curriculum Training Report Implementation Procedure
3. Evaluate effectiveness of Resource Family Home System.	7 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Planning and Accreditation Section Administrator	Home Development Statistics

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Item 7: Permanency goal for child.

CFSR Case Review Finding (Baseline): 80%  
 Louisiana Data Annual Goal: 82%  
 Louisiana PIP Data Goal: 84%  
 Achievement Date: 7th quarter  
 Method Of Measure: Peer Case Review and Quality Assurance Data

Establishment of an appropriate permanency goal in a timely manner for child was determined to be an area needing improvement in the Federal Review. In the thirty foster care cases reviewed, this item was rated a strength in 80% of the cases. Concerns include delays in achieving permanency timely and reassessing the appropriateness of goals assigned to children on an on-going basis.

DSS/OCS, Office of Youth Development, and the court system all have their own procedures to achieve permanency, but the procedures are not always coordinated to meet the best interest of the child timely. Education for all parties regarding federal, state, and agency regulations relating to permanency for children and timely achievement will be implemented.

Regional monitoring will be utilized to improve practice in this area. Procedures will be developed and monitored to review permanency goals for all children not in permanent placement. The PCR will provide a qualitative review of the appropriateness of the goals and identification of delays in achievement of the goal. The QA review process will provide a quantitative review of the timeliness of establishing and achieving identified goals.

Action Step 1: Develop and implement a statewide education package for legal stakeholders, DSS/OCS staff, Office of Youth Development staff, and other relevant stakeholders on federal, state and agency regulations regarding permanency and explore establishing standards for legal representation in child welfare proceedings.

<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Achievement Date</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Measure</b>
1. Draft and implement standards for legal representation.	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter	LA Court Improvement Program Coordinator	Draft Standards
2. Convene workgroup and develop education package.	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter	LA Court Improvement Program Coordinator	Education Package

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<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Achievement Date</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Measure</b>
3. Implement statewide and evaluate effectiveness of education package.	6 <sup>th</sup> quarter	LA Court Improvement Program Coordinator	Evaluation

Action Step 2: Review permanency goals for all children in foster care.

<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Achievement Date</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Measure</b>
1. Implement regional procedures for review of permanency goals for all children in foster care.	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	Regional CQI Chairpersons	Report
2. Evaluate effectiveness of regional procedures.	6 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Planning and Accreditation Section Administrator	Peer Case Review

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Item 8: Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives.

CFSR Case Review Finding (Baseline): 100%  
Data Profile (Baseline): 68.5% (National Standard 76.2%)  
Louisiana Data Annual Goal: 70.5%  
Louisiana PIP Data Goal: 72.3%  
Achievement Date: 7<sup>th</sup> Quarter  
Methods Of Measure: Tracking Information Payment System (TIPS) Quarterly Report and AFCARS Data

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This item was applicable for eight of the thirty foster care cases reviewed in the CFSR with 100% of these cases achieving the goals of reunification or permanent placement with relatives in a timely manner or, if the goals had not been achieved, whether the State had made, or was in the process of making, diligent efforts to achieve the goals in a timely manner. Data from the 2001 Data Profiles established that Louisiana did not meet the national standard of 76.2% or more as in only 65% of the cases did reunification occur within twelve months of entry into foster care. In the most recent 2003 Data Profiles, reunification within twelve months is being achieved in 68.5% of all cases. This most recent figure will be utilized as the baseline.

It was determined that better use of existing resources could assist the agency in returning children to their parents or relatives on a more timely basis. The agency will explore the use of McKinley Vento Act funds for transportation services so that children can return home or be placed with a relative and not have to change schools as workers have traditionally waited until the end of the school term to move children to these placements to avoid their transferring to a new school. The agency will also explore the use of more community resources in order to support the parents and relatives, and specifically services to assist the parents who have substance abuse problems. Expansion of the pilots designed to assist in earlier, safer reunifications such as the Family Group Decision Making and/or Mediation models into other sites is being explored. These pilots, currently existing in two sites, are successful in involving and motivating parents and relatives to focus on the changes that need to be made for the children to safely return home. It was determined that staff did not consistently consider returning children home between the six month intervals between the court hearing and family team conferences. Through use of the Safety Assessment (Form 5), supervisors will be asked to explore, on a more frequent basis, the child's safety when they are returned home. The form documents review of the assessment of safety, shared decision-making and safety plans put into place for children identified at risk. Additionally, the agency identified the need for focusing more intensely on services to the parent during the first few months of the child's stay in foster care as there appears to be a disproportionate amount of staff time and attention focused on the child's needs during that time. This will be achieved by providing support staff to assist in meeting the needs of the child in order that the worker can meet with the parent more frequently. Contracting for intensive services to the parent in the first sixty days is also being explored.

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Action Step 1: Expanded utilization of currently available resources and services to achieve and support permanency.

<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Achievement Date</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Measure</b>
1. Issue practice pointer to inform staff to contact the local school board to determine if foster children qualify to use McKinley Vento Act funds for the purpose of transportation to school and getting permission for the child to maintain current school placement.	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	Policy, Planning & Accreditation Division Director	Practice Pointer
2. Incorporate in policy the review of the Form 5 at quarterly Foster Care supervisory staffings to assess safety throughout the life of the case.	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	Policy Section Administrator	Policy
3. Evaluate compliance and effectiveness of practice pointer and revised policy in increasing and expediting permanency.	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter	FC Section Administrator	Quality Assurance Peer Case Review
4. Seek budget based increase for support staff to complete tasks required during the initial 30 days of a Foster Care case.	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter	Assistant Secretary	Budget Request

Action Step 2: Explore expansion of resources and services for families to achieve timely permanency.

<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Achievement Date</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Measure</b>
1. Develop the statewide 211 information system to enhance knowledge of community resources for information and referral.	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	Deputy Assistant Secretary	Information System
2. Explore piloting a model through the request of additional funds to contract for individualized parent services during the first sixty days of placement.	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	Assistant Secretary	Budget Request
3. Request additional funding to support expansion of Family Group Decision Making and/or mediation project.	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	Assistant Secretary	Budget Request
4. Request additional funding to replicate successful substance abuse initiatives such as Project LA-Safe.	5 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Assistant Secretary	Budget Request

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Action Step 3: Clarify legal/court issues to reduce barriers to permanency within 12 months.

<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Achievement Date</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Measure</b>
1. Develop strategies to engage the court as a resource to overcome barriers to permanency.	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	SAFE Act Task Force Chairperson	Report
2. Issue practice pointer to staff on the federal performance measure relating to reunification within 12 months.	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	Policy, Planning & Accreditation Division Director	Practice Pointer
3. Evaluate effectiveness of practice pointer in increasing reunification within 12 months.	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter	FC Section Administrator	Peer Case Review



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Item 9: Adoption within 24 months.

CFSR Case Review Finding (Baseline): 33%

Louisiana Case Review Annual Goal: 36%

Louisiana Case Review PIP Goal: 39%

Data Profile (Baseline): 18.9% (National Standard  $\geq 32\%$ )

Louisiana Annual Data Goal: 20.35%

Louisiana PIP Data Goal: 21.8%

Achievement Date: 7<sup>th</sup> quarter

Methods of Measure: Tracking Information Payment System (TIPS) Quarterly Report, AFCARS and Peer Case Review Data

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Adoption within twenty-four months was identified as an area needing improvement in the CFSR Review with six of the thirty foster cases applicable to item 9. Additionally, in evaluation of performance with the National Standards, 2001 data indicated that adoption was achieved within twenty-four months in 11.6% of all children adopted. Data from 2003 indicates that percentage rose to 18.9%. As with the other data indicators, the most recent data available will be utilized to establish the baseline.

Delays in finalizing adoption timely are affected by many factors including internal agency and court issues. In Item 7, action steps are listed to educate agency staff and the courts on federal, state, and agency regulations regarding achieving timely permanence and for regular review of goals. This action will also assist in improving Item 9.

In the CSFR and statewide case reviews, the need for on-going relative assessments was identified. The agency's practice has been to search for relatives when a case first comes to the attention of the agency or until relatives are identified. Standard practice has not been to reassess relatives on an on-going basis. This practice may contribute to delays in timely adoption finalization; therefore, it is imperative to strength practice in this area. By requesting the court's assistance in relative searches either through a search of court databases or court ordering parents to name relatives, and through agency assessment and reassessment at each Family Team Conference, this practice will be strengthened.

Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) packets are very detailed and time consuming. Delays have been noted in the agency's timely completion of the TPR packet and in the timely filing of the petition. By re-evaluating and prioritizing the items included in the packet, staff can complete the process timely. The education of legal stakeholders referred to in Item 7 will focus on decreasing filing delays.

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In statewide case reviews, delays have been noted in foster care staff transferring cases to the adoption unit. Supervisory monitoring will be utilized to improve practice in this area.

The agency will be collaborating with a national resource center to develop strategies to improve the recruitment/retention of foster/adoptive homes. Faith-based initiatives will also be implemented to assist in this area.

Action Step 1: Initial and ongoing search, assessment, and reassessment of relatives throughout the life of the case or until a permanent family is identified.

<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Achievement Date</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Measure</b>
1. Submit request to Court Improvement Program to include in Judges' Bench book identification of parents and relatives at the 72 hour and adjudication hearings.	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	Program Division Director	Written Request
2. Revise and implement policy to request the court's assistance in relative search efforts and require reassessment of relatives at each Family Team Conference.	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter	FC Section Administrator	Policy Quality Assurance
3. CPI policies and procedures to be revised and implemented to include relative search procedures.	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter	CPI/FS Section Administrator	Revised Policy and Procedures

Action Step 2: Reduce delays in the Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) process.

<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Achievement Date</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Measure</b>
1. Review the TPR packet to re-evaluate and prioritize the items to be included in the packet.	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	Regional Administrators	Revised TPR Packet Meeting Notes
2. Implement revised TPR packet.	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter	Supervisors	Implementation Procedures
3. Supervisors to review compliance with policy in submission of TPR packet to attorney within 30 days of goal change.	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Supervisors	Quality Assurance
4. Develop strategies with the Bureau of General Counsel to identify barriers and strategies to expedite the filing of the TPR petition.	6 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Program Division Director	Identified Barriers and Strategies

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Action Step 3: Transfer cases from foster care to adoption timely.

<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Achievement Date</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Measure</b>
1. Create and circulate to all staff a practice pointer regarding transferring cases from foster care to adoption within 30 days of the child being made available for adoption.	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	Policy Section Administrator	Practice Pointer
2. Supervisors to review cases to be transferred to ensure that all information is included so that the transfer will not be delayed.	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	Supervisors	Quality Assurance

Action Step 4: Improve recruitment and retention of foster/adoptive families.

<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Achievement Date</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Measure</b>
1. Each region will develop and implement a procedure to maintain contact with prospective foster/adoptive families between intake and MAPP/GPS training.	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	Regional Administrator	Regional Procedures
2. Collaborate with national resource center and Adopt USKids regarding faith-based initiatives and other strategies for recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive families.	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	FC Section Administrator	Technical Assistance Recruitment Strategies
3. Integrate faith-based initiatives and other strategies into regional recruitment/retention plans and update annually.	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter	Regional Home Development Supervisor	Recruitment/Retention Plans
4. Utilize annual foster parent conference to provide training to foster/adoptive families on legal issues, barriers, and post placement services.	1 <sup>st</sup> and 5 <sup>th</sup> quarters	Foster Parent Liaison Section Administrator	Conference Agenda

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Item 10: Permanency goal of other planned permanent living arrangement.

CFSR Case Review Finding (Baseline):	69%
Louisiana Data Annual Goal:	72%
Louisiana PIP Data Goal:	74%
Achievement Date:	7 <sup>th</sup> quarter
Methods Of Measure:	Peer Case Review and Quality Assurance Data

Permanency goal of other planned permanent living arrangement was an identified area needing improvement in the Federal Review. An overall rating of 69% of the cases reviewed indicated that the child was either in a planned permanent living arrangement meeting his or her needs or that services were appropriate to assist the child's transition from foster care to independent living. Sixteen cases were reviewed for their applicability to this item. An issue of concern is that children are aging out of care without an identified permanent placement or contact. Permanency is necessary to assist the child in making a successful transition to independence. In implementing procedures to identify permanent contacts for children in facilities, close attention will have to be given to the location of the contacts as a child may have several workers and reside in different regions throughout their stay in foster care. Consistency will be important. The permanent contact should be available for a child throughout the case and be involved in the case planning process. The agency will work closely to promote visitation with permanent contacts for children in foster care placements and residential facilities. The agency will utilize current faith-based initiatives and Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) to recruit contacts for children as well as other recruitment strategies. Also, independent living provider contracts will be reviewed to ensure that delivery of transitional services is provided.

Action Step 1: Identify and support permanent placements and contacts for children.

<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Achievement Date</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Measure</b>
1. Develop and circulate an interim practice pointer to focus on identification of permanent placement or contact for children and involvement of the person in case planning and visitation.	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	Policy Section Administrator	Practice Pointer

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<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Achievement Date</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Measure</b>
2. Develop and implement policy to guide staff in the identification of permanent placement or contact and to require that agency and independent living provider case plans include this identification.	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter	FC Section Administrator	Policy
3. National resource center to help develop training curriculum to train independent living providers and staff on individualizing case plans and transition plans for youth and permanent contacts.	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	Independent Living Program Manager	Technical Assistance Training Curriculum
4. Implement case and transition plan training statewide.	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter	FC Section Administrator	Training Report
5. Development of collaborative agreement or Memorandum of Understanding with state level CASA to assist in identification of permanent contacts or permanent placements for children without a permanent placement.	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	Program Division Director	Memorandum of Understanding or Formal Agreement
6. Each regional office will develop protocol with local CASA to search for permanent contacts or placements for children without permanent placement.	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter	Regional Administrators	Meeting Report
7. Assess effectiveness of utilization of CASA in search for permanent contacts and placements for children.	5 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Regional CQI Chairpersons	Report
8. Based upon assessment of effectiveness of CASA search for permanent contacts or relatives, make recommendations for revisions to process and/or continuation of CASA search process.	7 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Regional CQI Chairpersons	CQI Recommendations

Action Step 2: Strengthen services to assist children in the transition to independent living.

<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Achievement Date</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Measure</b>
1. Collaborate with Youth Advisory Board and independent living providers to develop a handbook for adolescents in care, which would include independent living and transition to independent living information.	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	Independent Living Program Manager	Handbook
2. Issue and discuss handbook with all adolescents (15 and older) in care and document distribution.	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter	Supervisors	Quality Assurance

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<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Achievement Date</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Measure</b>
3. Develop and implement policy regarding timely application for Medicaid waiver and referral of children to services through Office of Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD).	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	Policy Section Administrator	Policy
4. Review independent living provider contracts to ensure transitional services are provided.	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Independent Living Program Manager	Contract Review Report

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WELL BEING

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Well Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.

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Item 17: Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents.

CFSR Case Review Finding (Baseline):	72%
Louisiana Data Annual Goal:	74%
Louisiana PIP Data Goal:	76%
Achievement Date:	6 <sup>th</sup> quarter
Method Of Measure:	Peer Case Review and
Quality Assurance Data	

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In the fifty cases reviewed during the on site phase of the CFSR, services provided to children, parents and foster parents were determined to be an area needing improvement. This item is applicable to all services delivered by the agency and it applies to all fifty cases in the review. The agency provides numerous services to children, parents, and foster parents and this was noted in the CFSR Final Report. Agency interventions, and Item 17 as an outcome indicator, are intended to assist families, working within their resources, to have enhanced capacities to provide for their children's needs. This broad item reflects that intent for children, their parents, and the foster parents who temporarily care for the children when in custody. The planned Action Steps seek to address working to strengthen the capacity of the Family Services program staff to perform assessments by lowering the caseload standard for this program area and by taking action to increase assessments through broadening the involvement of foster parents, staff, and American Indian Tribes in service assessments, service planning and service delivery. The service delivery assessment process is altered in the Action Steps, with dual data sources from Peer Case Review data and from quarterly sampled case records, reviewed through supervisory review in each Family Services unit statewide.

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Action Step 1: Strengthen Family Services program assessments to better target interventions<sup>1</sup>

Benchmarks	Projected Achievement Date	Lead	Measure
1. Reduce Family Services caseload standard.	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	Field Services Division Director	Case Standard Memo/Policy
2. In consultation with a National Resource Center, revise assessment process, case plan, and other relevant forms to include substance abuse and domestic violence.	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	CPI/FS Section Administrator	Technical Assistance Revised Forms and Policies
3. Train 50% of staff on revised policy.	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter	Training Section Administrator	Training Curriculum Training Report
4. Train 100% of staff on revised policy.	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Training Section Administrator	Training Curriculum Training Report
5. Implement policy revisions.	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter	CPI/FS Section Administrator	Quality Assurance
6. Evaluate the implementation of policy revisions on the identification of client needs and services.	5 <sup>th</sup> quarter	CPI/FS Section Administrator	Peer Case Review

Action Step 2: Assess and strengthen contracted in-home psychotherapy services to prevent foster care placement and to reduce time to reunify.

Benchmarks	Projected Achievement Date	Lead	Measure
1. Assessment of contracted in-home services to identify service gaps.	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	Field Services Liaison Section Administrator	Contract Review Report
2. Based on assessment, modification of in-home services contracts to include specific performance outcomes.	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter	Field Services Liaison Section Administrator	Revised Contracts
3. Assess skills and needs of contract monitors.	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	Field Services Liaison Section Administrator	Skills Survey Report

<sup>1</sup> Intent is to structure increased supports to Family Service staff in acquiring quality assessments and strengthening links to the case plan to better target intervention and services.



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<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Achievement Date</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Measure</b>
4. Develop training to strengthen and expand skills of contract monitors.	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter	Field Services Liaison Section Administrator	Training Curriculum
5. Train 100 % of contract monitors.	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Training Section Administrator	Training Report
6. Evaluate success of in-home services contracts in the prevention of foster care placement and early reunification.	7 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Field Services Liaison Section Administrator	Performance Outcomes Measures Report

Action Step 3: Develop, conduct, and evaluate joint in-service training for caseworkers, foster parents, and the four federally-recognized American Indian Tribes.

<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Achievement Date</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Measure</b>
1. Implement policy requiring participation by agency staff in MAPP/GPS.	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	FC Section Administrator	Policy Training Report
2. Assess training needs of caseworkers, four federally-recognized American Indian Tribes, and foster parents.	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	Regional Administrators	Assessment Report
3. Deliver joint training for staff, foster parents, and the four federally-recognized American Indian Tribes, based on assessed needs.	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Regional Administrators	Training Curriculum Training Report
4. Evaluate training with staff, foster parents, and the four federally-recognized American Indian tribes.	5 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Regional Administrators	Evaluation Reports

Action Step 4: Include Social Service Directors of the four federally-recognized American Indian tribes in quarterly CQI Meetings.

<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Achievement Date</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Measure</b>
1. Expand CQI Procedures Handbook to include inviting Social Service Directors of the four federally-recognized American Indian Tribes to participate in regional CQI meetings.	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	Planning & Accreditation Section Administrator	CQI Handbook Revisions



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Action Step 1: Educate staff on strategies and policy to improve child and family involvement in case planning.

<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Achievement Date</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Measure</b>
1. Collaborate with Youth Advisory Board, and independent living providers to develop handbook for adolescents in care in collaboration with Youth Advisory Board and Independent Living Providers, which would address and explain need for involvement in case planning.	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	Independent Living Program Manager	Handbook
2. Explore expansion of Family Group Decision Making and/or mediation, including request for additional funding.	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	Assistant Secretary	Budget Request
3. Review and revise policies and/or issue practice pointers on promoting child and family involvement in case planning and documentation.	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	Policy, Planning & Accreditation Division Director	Practice Pointers Policy
4. Implement policy changes or practice pointers.	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter	Supervisors	Policy
5. Evaluate compliance with revised policy and/or practice pointers on family involvement in case planning.	5 <sup>th</sup> quarter	FC Section Administrator	Quality Assurance
6. Evaluate effectiveness of revised policy and/or practice pointers on increasing family involvement in case planning.	5 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Planning & Accreditation Section Administrator	Peer Case Review

Action Step 2: Explore use of community resources via state family resource center staff in engaging resistant clients in Family Services cases.

<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Achievement Date</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Measure</b>
1. Family resource center contract workgroup to develop recommendations for expansion of services to include outreach and/or services to engage resistant clients in involvement in case planning.	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	Field Services Liaison Section Administrator	Workgroup Recommendations
2. Modify contracts, if necessary, to include expanded services.	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Field Services Liaison Section Administrator	Revised Contracts
3. Educate staff on changes in Resource Center services.	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Field Services Liaison Section Administrator	Regional Administrator Memo
4. Revise policy to include referrals of resistive clients to family resource centers.	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Policy Section Administrator	Policy

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<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Achievement Date</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Measure</b>
5. Evaluate utilization and effectiveness of services provided by Resource Centers in each region.	7 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Regional Program Specialists	Contract Monitoring Report

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Item 20: Worker visits with parent(s).

CFSR Case Review Finding (Baseline): 80%  
 Louisiana Data Annual Goal: 82%  
 Louisiana PIP Data Goal: 85%  
 Achievement Date: 6<sup>th</sup> Quarter  
 Methods Of Measure: Peer Case Review and  
 Quality Assurance Data

During the CFSR, forty-one of the fifty cases were assessed to determine whether the caseworker’s visits with the children’s mothers and fathers was of sufficient frequency and quality to promote attainment of case goals and/or ensure the children’s safety and well being. In 80% of the cases reviewed, the visits were of sufficient frequency and quality to do so.

It has been determined that policy clarifications are needed as there are differing interpretations among staff as to the frequency of visitation required based upon the parent’s involvement, absence, location, etc. Also, in light of the extensive time workers spend in searching for absent parents, the agency will collaborate with Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) in searching for absent parents and extended family members. The state level CASA association has agreed to partner with DSS/OCS in this effort and plans are being developed to implement this strategy on the local level as well. As the confusion and varying expectations related to the search for absent parents extends to the courts and attorneys, the agency will explore codifying search requirements.

Action Step 1: Clarify agency policy impacting worker visits with parents to support parental involvement.

<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Achievement Date</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Measure</b>
1. Review and revise policy addressing location, frequency and focus of visits on case planning service delivery and goal attainment.	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	Policy Section Administrator	Policy
2. Implement policy changes.	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	Supervisors	Policy Review
3. Evaluate compliance with policy changes.	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter	FC Section Administrator	Quality Assurance
4. Evaluate effectiveness of policy on improving parental involvement.	6 <sup>th</sup> quarter	FC Section Administrator	Quality Assurance

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Action Step 2: Provide consistent efforts statewide in locating absent parents.

<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Achievement Date</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Measure</b>
1. Develop Memorandum of Understanding with state level CASA to assist in efforts to identify absent parents, and potential relative resources.	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	Program Division Director	Memorandum of Understanding
2. Assist staff in completing more comprehensive and timely searches for absent parents via approved Internet searches.	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	FC Section Administrator	Internet Search Policy
3. Develop local procedures for involvement of CASA in search for absent parents.	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Regional Administrator	Procedures Report
4. Request Children's Code Committee to establish a task force to look at implications of codifying search requirements.	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	DSS/OCS Children's Code Committee Representative	Legislative Task Force Request

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Well Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.

Item 21: Educational needs of the child.

CFSR Case Review Finding (Baseline): 78%  
 Louisiana Data Annual Goal: 79.5%  
 Louisiana PIP Data Goal: 82%  
 Achievement Date: 7<sup>th</sup> quarter  
 Methods of Measure: Peer Case Review and  
 Quality Assurance Data

This well-being item concerns whether children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs. It was applied to forty-one of the fifty cases reviewed. Cases considered not applicable were ones in which the children were not of school age or did not have needs pertaining to education related issues. Reviewers noted whether the children had their educational needs assessed and whether educational services were provided. The reviewers noted difficulties regarding coordinating and providing for the needs of children who required special education services. Provision of these services require caseworkers to collaborate with school representatives, Louisiana Department of Education staff, foster parents, parents, caregivers, regional special education coordinators, and the child. This was noted as an area needing improvement. With the implementation of the Resource Family System and the resulting reduction in placement changes, that strategy will also have a positive impact on reduction in school placement changes. The following proposed action steps outline expectations that involve stressing local level interventions through regional meetings.

Action Step 1: Identify and address critical educational problems and issues for children.

<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Achievement Date</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Measure</b>
1. Identify critical educational problems and issues for children.	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	FC Section Administrator	DSS/OCS and DPSC/OYD Staff Survey
2. Revise policy and forms to include obtaining educational data through existing assessment forms (include use of DSS/OCS Form 6/referral form, DSS/OCS Form 98-B/Educational Records, Form 60/Family Services Social Assessment to identify educational services that are being provided).	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter	Policy Section Administrator	Policy

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<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Achievement Date</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Measure</b>
3. Implementation of revised policy and forms.	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Policy Section Administrator	Quality Assurance Peer Case Review
4. Evaluate effectiveness of policy and forms revisions in provision of educational services to family services clients and foster care children.	7 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Program Division Director	Peer Case Review

Action Step 2: Improve communication across service delivery providers.

<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Projected Achievement Date</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Measure</b>
1. Identification and discussion of problematic issues between educational system, DPSC/OYD and DSS/OCS at state level.	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	Program Division Director	Report
2. Identification and discussion of problematic issues between educational system, DPSC/OYD and DSS/OCS at local level.	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	Regional CQI Chairpersons	Report
3. Development of strategies to improve communication between local school boards and child welfare agency.	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter	Regional CQI Chairpersons	Report
4. Implementation of strategies.	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Regional Administrators	Memo Implementation Plan
5. Evaluation of effectiveness of strategies.	7 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Regional CQI Chairpersons	Survey Peer Case Review



Well Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.

Item 23: Mental health needs of the child.

CFSR Case Review Finding (Baseline):	74%
Louisiana Data Annual Goal:	76%
Louisiana PIP Data Goal:	78%
Achievement Date:	7 <sup>th</sup> quarter
Methods of Measurement:	Peer Case Review and Quality Assurance Data

The intent of this well-being item is for children to receive adequate services to meet their mental health needs. This item was applicable in forty-two of the fifty cases reviewed for the on site CFSR phase. In the review, cases were exempted when the child was considered too young or when mental health needs were not an issue in the case. The keys to review of this Item are (1) whether mental health needs had been appropriately assessed, and (2) whether appropriate services to address assessed needs have been offered or provided to the child and family. The CFSR Final Report indicates that there was a variance in consistency in meeting the mental health needs of children depending on whether the child is in foster care placement with the agency or whether the child remained with their family and the family was receiving in-home services, with the child in placement receiving better mental health assessment and services, according to the review results. It has subsequently been clarified with the Administration for Children and Families that the services provided in in-home cases do not have to be the same as in foster care cases. Innovative programs that are developed and implemented by the agency were noted: Infant Mental Health Team services assess children and their placement opportunities, ChildNet is coordinated with the Department of Education and Department of Health and Hospitals, and Early Periodic Screening Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) services are utilized by the agency. The following action step focuses on strategies designed to correct or improve areas needing improvement as noted in the state's CFSR Final Report.

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Action Step 1: Maximize service delivery to children to better meet their mental health needs.

Benchmarks	Projected Achievement Date	Lead	Measure
1. Seek additional budgetary support to expand mental health infant team models to additional regions of the state.	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	Assistant Secretary	Budget Request
2. Revise tools, policies and procedures developed in Clinical Evaluation Program to make assessments and services more targeted to the needs of clients and to also improve management of evaluation and treatment purchases.	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	Field Services Liaison Section Administrator	Mental Health Assessment and Treatment Policies
3. Line Supervisors/District Managers educate and train staff on changes in policy/forms expectations regarding assessments for mental health needs. (to be done either in groups at the regional level or in supervisory units)	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	District Managers	Training Report
4. Monitor utilization of tools and compliance with policies.	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Program Division Director	Quality Assurance
5. Evaluate current mental health screening and assessment tools, policies, and practices in concert with National Resource Center.	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Foster Care Section Administrator	Evaluation Findings
6. Initiate meetings with Department of Health and Hospitals Secretary/Office of Mental Health Assistant Secretary and DPSC/OYD to develop joint agreements to improve mental health assessments and services to children.	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	Assistant Secretary	Meeting Minutes Agreements
7. Through assistance from a National Resource Center, develop and provide opportunities for cross-training of Mental Health, DPSC/OYD and DSS/OCS staff to promote better networking and information sharing.	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter	Training Section Administrator	Technical Assistance Request Training report
8. Evaluate children's receipt of mental health assessment and services.	6 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Program Division Director	Peer Case Review

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APPENDIX A

Program Improvement Plan Workgroup Participants

Program Improvement Plan Steering Committee

Keyth Devillier	DSS/OCS Financial Management Division
Kerry Everitt	Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)
Marketa Garner Gautreau	DSS/OCS Assistant Secretary
Marty Gibson	DSS/OCS Resource Development and Quality Assurance Division
Mark Harris	LA Supreme Court, Court Improvement Program
Kaaren Hebert, Chair	DSS/OCS Program Division
Debbie Johnson	DSS/OCS Financial Management Division
Joseph Keegan	DSS/OCS Residential and Private Foster Care Section
Judy Mastro	DSS/OCS Field Services Division
Lois Mayho	DSS/OCS Financial Management Division
John McInturf	DSS/OCS Child Welfare Quality Assurance and Research Section
Melba Oubre	Office of Youth Development (OYD)
Connie Wagner	DSS/OCS Field Services Division
Carmen Weisner	DSS/OCS Deputy Assistant Secretary
Ann Silverberg Williamson	DSS Secretary
Martha Wyly	DSS/OCS Policy, Planning and Accreditation Division

Program Improvement Plan committee Chairs and Co-Chairs

Safety Committee

Chair - Cindy Phillips, DSS/OCS Child Protection Investigation and Family Services Section

Permanency Continuity Committee

Chair – Jean Pittman, DSS/OCS Foster Care and Home Development Section

Permanency Adoption Committee

Co-Chair – Celeste Skinner, DSS/OCS Foster Care and Home Development Section

Co-Chair – Karla Ventkataram, DSS/OCS Planning and Accreditation Section

Well Being Committee

Co-Chair – Joel McLain, DSS/OCS Planning and Accreditation Section

Co-Chair – Brent Villemarette, DSS/OCS Lafayette Region

Program Improvement Plan Committee Participants

Jean Allen-Wilson	Tunica/Biloxi Native American Tribe
Claudelle Ancar	DSS/OCS Lafayette
J.R.”Ric” Bassett	Department of Health and Hospitals, Office of Mental Health
Betty Becker	DSS/OCS Independent Living Program
Connie Billiodeau	DSS/OCS Adoption Section

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Virginia Collins	DSS/OCS Field Services Liaison Section
Katherine Boudreaux	The Extra Mile, Family Resource Center
Arianne Bruneau	DSS/OCS Child Protection Investigation and Family Services Section
Susan Bueche	DSS/OCS Adoption Section
Valerie Burris	DSS/OCS New Orleans
Toni Buxton	DSS/OCS Policy Section
Bonnie Callahan	Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities
Marilee Cash	DSS ACESS Project
Bridget Clark	DSS/OCS Planning Section
Kathy Curtis	DSS/OCS Policy Section
Bruce Daniels	DSS/OCS Adoption Section
Marcia Daniels	DSS/OCS Field Services Liaison Section
Paul St. Dizier	Bureau of General Counsel
Anthony Ellis	DSS/OCS Field Services Liaison Section
Walter Fahr	DSS/OCS Child Protection Investigation and Family Services Section
Miranda R. Ford	DSS ACESS Project
Beth Fuller	DSS ACESS Project
Joan M. Fullilove	Coushatta Social Services, Coushatta Native American Tribe
Laura Ghara	DSS/OCS Training Section
Trudy Gosserand	DSS/OCS Point Coupee
Willene Griffin	DSS/OCS Child Protection Investigation and Family Services Section
Cindy Guitrau	DSS/OCS Residential and Private Foster Care Section
Carolyn Hall	DSS/OCS Interstate Compact Section
Mamye Hall	Department of Education
Thomas Hall	DSS ACESS Project
Charlotte Hawkins	DSS Management and Finance
Rhenda Hodnett	DSS/OCS Child Protection Investigation and Family Services Section
Richard Horner	DSS/OCS Planning Section
Dorie Ivey	DSS/OCS Foster Care and Home Development Section
Gwen Jackson	DSS/OCS Field Services Liaison Section
Patsy Johnson	DSS/OCS Training Section
Peggy Kirby	Louisiana Foster Adoptive Parent Association
Dianne Kirkpatrick	DSS/OCS Foster Care and Home Development Section
Linda Lafield	DSS/OCS Policy Section
Wendi Lemoine	DSS/OCS Livingston
Gail Lewis	DSS/OCS Terribonne
Barbara Mays	DSS/OCS Policy Section
Nancy Miller	DSS/OCS Foster/Adoptive Parent Liaison
Teri Monday	DSS/OCS Policy Section
Roy Ortego	Department of Corrections, Office of Youth Development
Sheila Price-Jones	DSS/OCS Baton Rouge
Linda Rainey	DSS/OCS West Jefferson
Gene Rosby	DSS/OCS Foster Care and Home Development Section
Quinetta L. Rowley	Department of Health and Hospitals, Office of Addictive Disorders

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Kellie Senseney	DSS/OCS Covington
Barbara Siemann	DSS/OCS Baton Rouge
Dalene Smith	DSS /OCS Training Section
Rebecca Smith	DSS/OCS West Jefferson
Cheryl Stekley	Department of Education
Deborah Tanner	DSS/OCS New Orleans
Ellen Trahan	DSS/OCS Lafayette
Bill Vincent	DSS/OCS Child Welfare Quality Assurance and Research Section
Patrice Waldrop	DSS/OCS Child Protection Investigation and Family Services
Sherry White	DSS/OCS Child Welfare Quality Assurance and Research Section

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DSS – Department of Social Services  
OCS – Office of Community Services