



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Regional Office VI
1301 Young St, Room 914
Dallas, TX 75202

November 30, 2005

Secretary Ann S. Williamson
Office of the Secretary
Department of Social Services
State of Louisiana
P.O. Box 3776
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70821

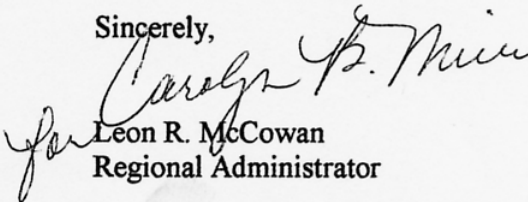
Dear Secretary Williamson:

We are pleased to notify you that Louisiana's Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR) has been approved and meets the requirements as set forth in ACYF-CB-PI-05-04 as the annual report of progress on Louisiana's 2005-2009 Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP). A primary review was conducted by your program specialist, Amy Grissom, LMSW, with secondary reviews completed by specialists with functional lead assignments in the Regional Office's Child Welfare Unit. The Louisiana Child and Family Services Plan and APSR are especially strong in integrating the Child and Family Services Review Program Improvement Plan (PIP).

This letter transmits signed copy of the approved FFY 2006 CFS-101, Part I. In addition, copies of this letter and enclosure have been mailed to the Office of Management Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families.

We recognize the enormous challenges with which you, Assistant Secretary Gautreau and the Office of Community Services staff are dealing as a result of the recent natural disasters. We especially appreciate your staff's diligence to ensure that the APSR is comprehensive and compliant with Federal requirements. The Regional Office, the Child Welfare National Resource Centers and the Children's Bureau staff look forward to working with the State to revise the CFSP to reflect changing priorities resulting from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Should you require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Amy Grissom at 214-767-4958 or Program Manager, June Lloyd at 214-767-8466.

Sincerely,


for Leon R. McCowan
Regional Administrator

Enclosure

cc: Marketa Gautreau, Assistant Secretary
John McInturf, Division Director
Joel McLain, Section Administrator



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November 21, 2005

Mr. Leon R. McCowan, Director
Administration for Children and Families Region VI
1301 Young Street, Suite 914
Dallas, Texas 75202

Dear Mr. McCowan

RE: RESPONSE TO ACF REGIONAL COMMENTS ON THE ANNUAL PROGRESS
SERVICES REPORT FOR 2004-2005 FFY

REF: Log No: ACYF-CB-PI-04-05

The Louisiana Department of Social Services, Office of Community Services (OCS), is pleased to provide a response to comments by the ACF regional office on the Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR) for 2005 FFY. The ACF Comments were received on October 6, 2005. We thank you for your positive evaluation of the APSR and we appreciate the concise and clear way the reviewers have provided their comments.

Please note the following in response to ACF comments on the 2005 APSR:

- Louisiana does not implement any child welfare demonstrations. There is no information included in the APSR pertaining to child welfare demonstrations.
- Since receiving the feedback, OCS has revised the APSR to include the recommended changes where these were not included in the previous draft. Additional information has been added to the APSR in order to convey to all readers the goals, and related activities the Comprehensive Child and Family Services Plan envisioned. Additional information is provided on the following topics requested by the ACF Regional Comments list:

Program Instruction Section A.1, c, Child Abuse/neglect Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment: please see Pages 33-34 additional information is presented; Family Support additional information is presented on Pages 35-37 as part of Family Services description; the initiatives presented in these pages reflect numerous family support services; Other Permanent Living Arrangements: This is now added to the APSR, see Page 51, June 2005 policy issuance on "Alternative Permanent Living Arrangement (Policy 6-860)."

1. Program Instruction Section, A.2, b. CAPTA areas selected for improvement: See APSR Page 95, bullet four which references changes in CAPTA. This reflects improvement sought with better collaboration and communication with the medical community. This activity will continue in the current reporting period (FFY 2006).
2. Program Instruction Section, A.2, c. CAPTA areas selected for change in 2006: Other than the above area selected for improvement, there are no specific areas selected for change in 2006.
3. Section A.3, Chafee purposes 1 – 5, percentage of amount of program funds spent on room and board and how funds were used: Please see the last paragraph on Page 68.
4. Section A.3, Chafee purpose 6, description of results of OCS' plan: Please refer to Pages 78-84 in the document. The ETV program is discussed in these pages.
5. Section A.3, Number of youth eligible to receive ETV: Please refer to page 82 "Outcomes of the ETV Program" which indicates that the number eligible cannot be provided but the Agency plans to provide this information in the future.
6. Section A.3, planned changes in service for Chafee/ETV: See Pages 76-77 under the heading "Planned CFCIP Changes in 2006" which addresses various changes envisioned. See also Page 82, "Outcomes of the ETV Program" which references planned changes in the ability to report new automated data information regarding eligible youth.

We have addressed ACF comments by adding information to the Louisiana APSR for 2005. Thank you for this opportunity to improve the reporting contained in the APSR, and if there are any questions please contact Joel McLain, Section Administrator, at (225) 342-2416 or by e-mail at: jmclain@dss.state.la.us.

Sincerely,



Marketa Garner Gautreau
Section Administrator

JMM/RH/gw

Attachment

The background of the page features a large, faint watermark of the Seal of the State of Louisiana. The seal is circular and contains the text "STATE OF LOUISIANA" at the top, "UNION JUSTICE" in the middle, and "CONFIDENCE" at the bottom. In the center of the seal is an eagle with its wings spread, perched on a shield. The year "1804" is visible at the bottom of the seal.

2005

Annual Progress

and

Service Report

Louisiana Department of Social Services

Office of Community Services

STATE OF LOUISIANA

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Introduction

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 for the development and provision of social services and the 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.

This report updates, profiles and summarizes the progress and achievements made by DSS/OCS in its implementation of year one of the 2005-2009 Consolidated Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP).

The report contains information on the following areas:

1. **Organizational Charts** – Charts have been updated to include recent organizational changes.
2. **Performance Measures** – This section provides baseline data on safety, permanency and well-being indicators as well as a brief summary of the Title IV-E eligibility review and the program improvement plan.
3. **Community Consultation and Collaboration** – This section provides information on the progress made in expanding and enhancing community collaboration.
4. **Indian Child Welfare Act and Tribal Collaboration** – Information provided describes the development of an improved infrastructure allowing for networking, agreements, cross training, and communication between American Indian Tribal representatives and agency staff at parish, regional, and state levels. Agency compliance with the five major components of ICWA is also provided.
5. **Court Improvement Project** - This section provides an update on various initiatives to improve the relationship between the Agency and the judiciary.
6. **Children's Justice Act (CJA)** – A listing of activities and accomplishments of the CJA is listed in this section.
7. **Technical Assistance** – Training and technical assistance utilized from the Administration for Children and Families is contained in this section.

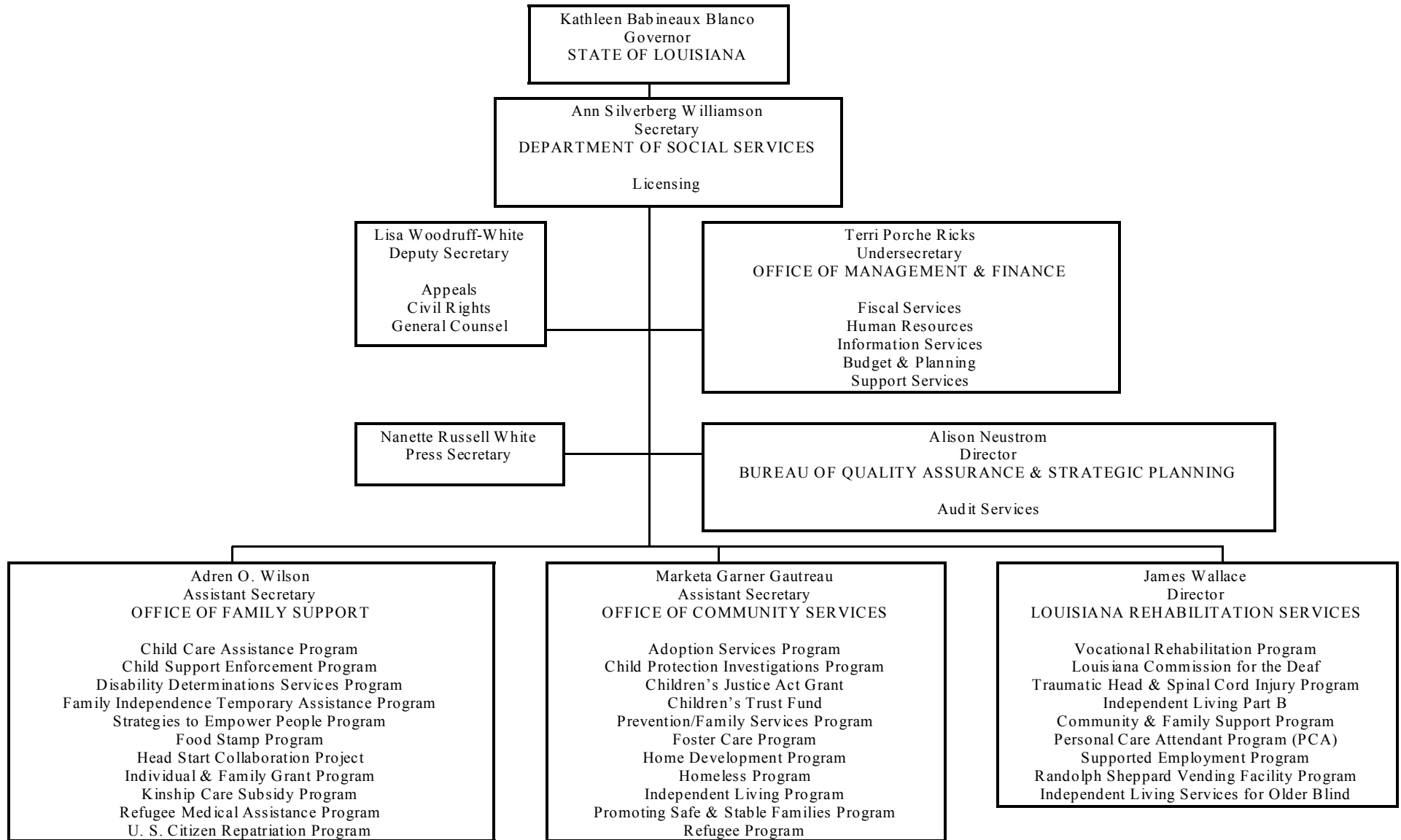
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8. **Research and Evaluation** - This portion of the plan summarizes identified needs for research and evaluation.
9. **Information Management System** –Updates are provided on agency progress in the development of the A Comprehensive Enterprise Social Services System (ACCESS).
10. **Child Welfare Continuum**– Progress and achievement in the implementation of the major service delivery programs of Child Protection Investigations, Child Abuse/Neglect Prevention, Intervention, and Treatments, Family Services, Foster Care and Adoption Services are outlined in this section.
11. **Chafee Foster Care Independence Program Report for 2005 and Application For FFY 2006** – This section profiles the efforts to reach adolescents who are in foster care and to prepare youth for young adulthood.
12. **Promoting Safe and Stable Families** – The Agency’s implementation of the Social Security Act, Title IV-B, Subpart 2 is described in this section.
13. **Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA)**– This section contains information on agency initiatives funded by the CAPTA grant.
14. **Citizen Review Panels** – Updates to 2002 and 2003 Citizen Review Panel recommendations are provided in this section along with the 2004 Citizen Review Panel Annual Report.
15. **Systemwide Goals and Objectives** – This portion of the plan contains updates and changes to systemwide goals and objectives.
16. **Training** – This section contains information on new training delivered in SFY 2004 – 20005 and new training planned for SFY 2005 – 2006.
17. **Program Improvement Plan (PIP) Summary** – This portion provides information on the initiation and progress of the Louisiana PIP for the first and second quarter of implementation.
18. **Financial Comparison, Title IV-B, Subpart 2 Expenditures and Annual Budget Request for 2005 – 2006** – This section contains information on non-supplantation; a comparison of federal fiscal year state and local share spending for Title IV-B, Subpart 2 against 1992 base year amount and maintenance of effort; and a comparison of federal fiscal year state expenditures against 1979 Title IV-B, Subpart 1 state expenditures. Also included in this portion of the plan is estimated expenditures for delivery of Title IV-B, Subpart 2 services and the request for funding (CFS-101).

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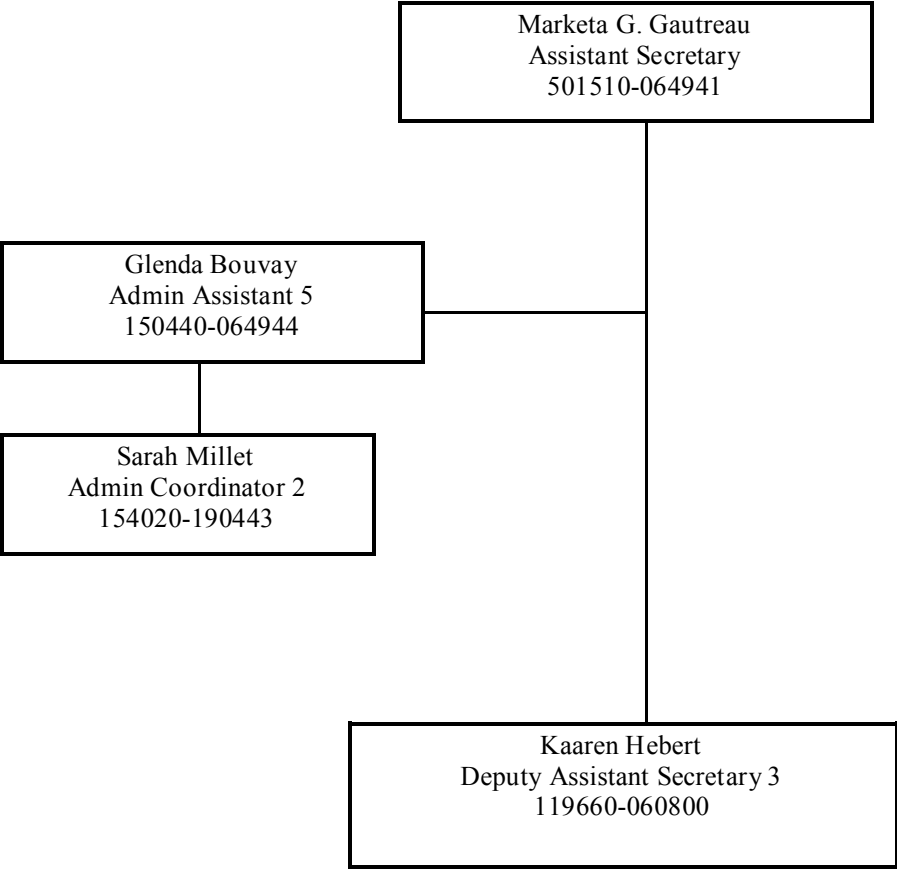
1.0 Organizational Charts

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES



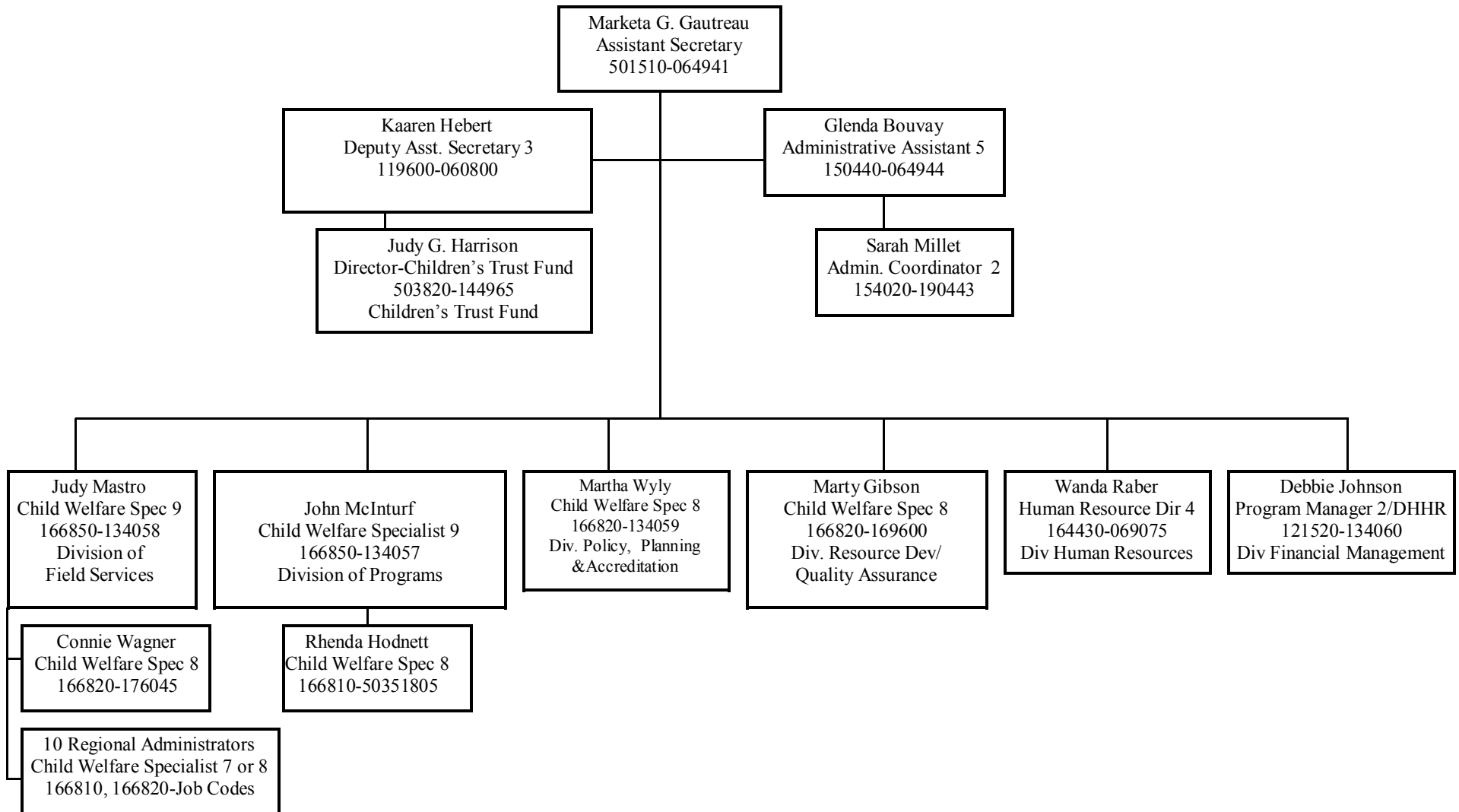
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ASSISTANT SECRETARY'S OFFICE



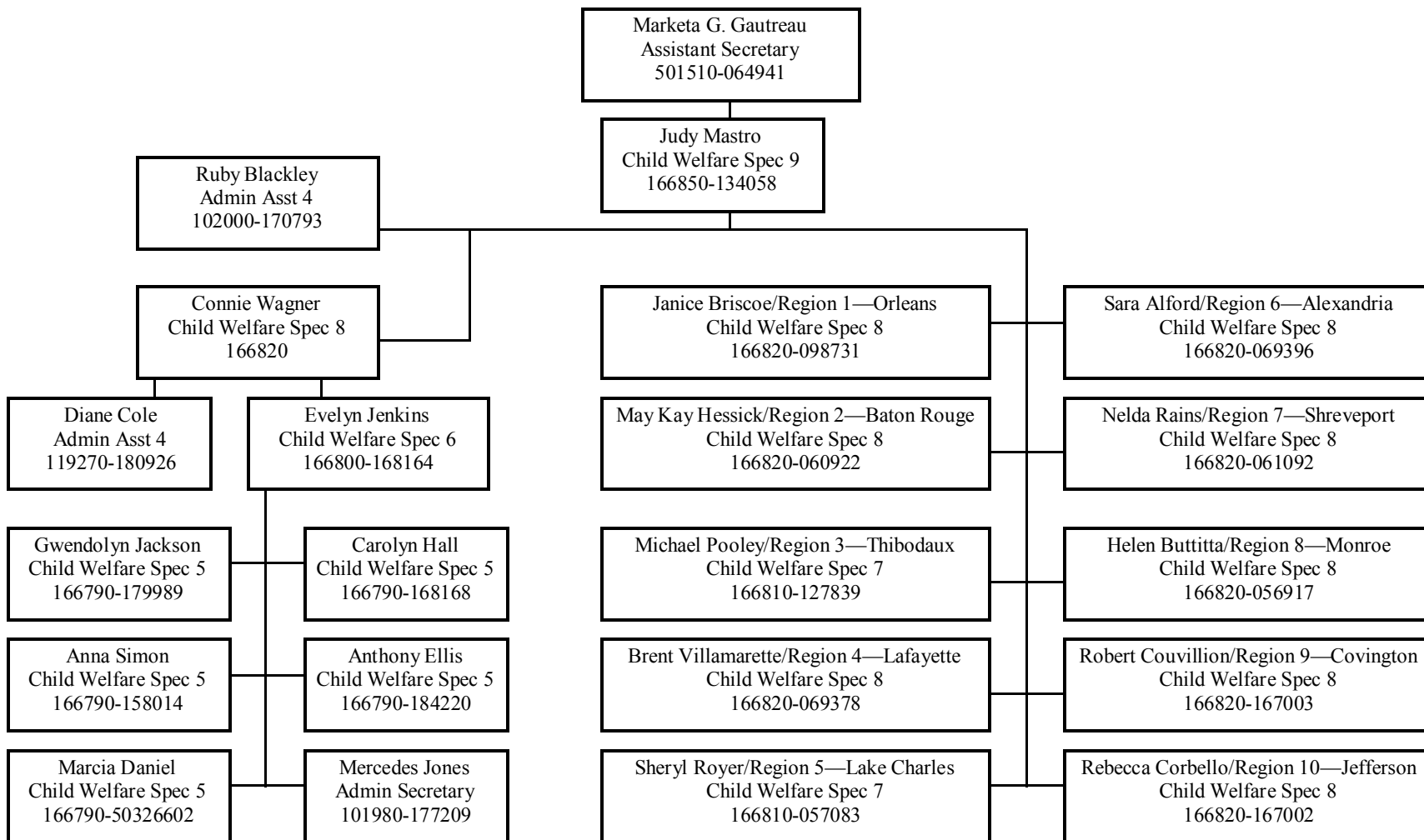
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OFFICE OF COMMUNITY SERVICES



STATE OF LOUISIANA
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DIVISION OF FIELD SERVICES



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2.0 Performance Measures

The Agency measures its performance through a Continuous Quality Improvement process that includes a statewide Peer Case Review (PCR) process. This process provides an opportunity for self-analysis and an in-depth examination of caseworker practice and child and family outcomes.

The following chart provides baseline data on performance/outcome measures for safety, permanency and well being measured through the PCR process in SFY 2003 – 2004. A total of 207 cases were reviewed. (Note: Only seven regions underwent the PCR process in this time period.)

PEER CASE REVIEW

Statewide Data

Reviews Completed in State Fiscal Year 2003 - 2004 (7/1/2003 - 6/30/2004)

SAFETY-Initiation of Investigation

Q#	Question	% of cases in compliance
S1.	Based on the information available at intake, were the response priorities, risk levels, and allegations assigned properly?	77.1%
S2.	Were all child victims in the investigations seen timely?	67.4%
S3.	Was at least one caretaker of the child victim in the investigations seen timely?	69.7%
S4.	Were validity decisions made within 30 days of receipt of the report(s)?	56.7%
S5.	Was the investigation completed within 60 days?	46.4%

SAFETY-Quality of Investigation

Q#	Question	% of cases in compliance
S6.	Were non-involved children in the family seen?	67.9%
S7.	Were all perpetrators, parents and other adult members of the child victim(s) household seen?	73.8%
S8.	Were all required collaterals based on the level of the investigations contacted?	82.6%
S9.	Were additional allegations investigated in the course of the investigation?	61.7%

SAFETY-Repeat Maltreatment

Q#	Question	% of cases in compliance
S10.	For all child victims in the most recent report of child abuse/neglect, were the children protected from repeat maltreatment?	82.1%
S11.	Did any incidents of repeat maltreatment involve different perpetrators?	22.9%
S12.	Did any incidents of repeat maltreatment involve different allegations?	38.2%

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SAFETY-Safety Planning

Q#	Question	% of cases in compliance
S13.	If a safety plan was needed, was one developed?	88.5%
S14.	Was the family involved in planning for the safety of the child during the investigation(s)?	76.6%
S15.	Did the safety plan(s) provide a description of actions to be taken to protect each child in relation to the safety concerns?	86.4%
S16.	Did the safety plan(s) specifically identify who is responsible for implementing each component of the plan(s)?	63.7%
S17.	Was timely supervisory approval of the safety plan(s) obtained?	67.4%

SAFETY-Risk of Harm

Q#	Question	% of cases in compliance
S18.	Were reasonable efforts made by the agency to reduce/remove the risk of harm within this family unit through CPI or FS?	94.5%
S19.	Were reasonable efforts made by the agency to reduce/remove the risk of harm within this family unit after removal of the children?	93.3%

SAFETY-Risk of Harm in FC Placement

Q#	Question	% of cases in compliance
S20.	If child has been a victim of abuse/neglect in any placement while in foster care, was this first abuse/neglect incident for this child involving this provider?	75.0%
S21.	For all incidents of abuse/neglect by a placement provider, was corrective action taken with the provider?	55.6%

PERMANENCY-Placement Issues

Q#	Question	% of cases in compliance
P1.	Is this the child's first entry into foster care?	90.1%
P2.	At the initial placement was the child placed in close proximity (the same parish or community) to at least one parent?	82.9%
P3.	If not currently placed in close proximity to at least one parent, was placement in the child's best interests or necessary to achieve the child's permanency goal?	97.0%
P4.	Have maternal relatives been identified and explored as placement resources or visitation resources?	88.8%
P5.	Have paternal relatives been identified and explored as placement resources or visitation resources?	66.1%
P6.	If the child was not placed with any siblings who were in foster care, was there clear evidence that separation was necessary to meet the needs of the child?	87.2%
P7.	Were efforts made to maintain placements in danger of disruption?	79.2%
P8.	When a placement change was made, was move made to a less restrictive setting or to help achieve the goals in child's case plan?	80.6%
P9.	Were the parents kept informed regarding problems and changes in the child's placement?	82.8%
P10.	After the initial placement, were pre-placement visits held with each placement, including adoptive placements?	45.9%
P11.	For the child under age 8, at high risk of not returning home, was the child placed with an adoptive resource family?	82.0%
P12.	If the child is in an adoptive placement, was a presentation with a complete history on the child made to the adoptive parents prior to the placement decision being made?	69.7%
P13.	For all children available for adoption, but with no identified adoptive placement, have reasonable efforts been made to explore in-state and out-of-state adoptive resources?	94.1%
P14.	For all children available for adoption, but with no identified adoptive placement,	76.5%

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have relatives and previous caretakers been reassessed to determine current suitability as an adoptive placement?

P15. Were efforts made to have siblings adopted together? **80.9%**

PERMANENCY-Reunification, Guardianship or Custody Transfer as Goal

Q#	Question	% of cases in compliance
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P16.	For the child with this case goal, has the child been in the custody of the state less than 12 months?	72.5%
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PERMANENCY-Adoption as Goal

Q#	Question	% of cases in compliance
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P17.	If the child does not have an identified adoptive placement, was a Child Specific Recruitment Plan (CSRP) developed and then updated at each FTC?	55.6%
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P18.	If the child is available for adoption and does not have an identified adoptive placement, are monthly supervisory case staffings occurring or weekly supervisory case staffings for infants?	50.0%
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P19.	Are home studies and certification of child specific adoptive placements being completed timely, if applicable in this case?	78.3%
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P20.	If the child's adoption finalized, was it within 24 months of entry into foster care?	32.3%
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P21.	If child qualified for special needs or maintenance subsidy was subsidy offered to adoptive parents prior to adoptive placement decision?	65.0%
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P22.	Were all identified special needs of the child addressed in the adoption subsidy?	88.2%
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PERMANENCY-Permanent FC or Independent Living as Goal

Q#	Question	% of cases in compliance
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P23.	Have other, more permanent goals been considered and appropriately ruled out for the child?	95.7%
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P24.	If the child is 16 or older, are services being provided specific to preparing the child for adulthood and independence?	100.0%
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PERMANENCY-Permanency Goal

Q#	Question	% of cases in compliance
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P25.	Has the child's most recent permanency goal been determined to be in the best interests of the child?	99.2%
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P26.	Are steps being taken by the agency to achieve the current permanency goal and remove any barriers?	93.9%
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PERMANENCY-Family Visitation

Q#	Question	% of cases in compliance
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P27.	Have visits that were actually held between the child and mother been in accordance with policy?	55.6%
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P28.	Have visits that were actually held between the child and father been in accordance with policy?	32.9%
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P29.	Have visits actually held between child and siblings in foster care who were not in same placement been in accordance with policy?	71.7%
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P30.	If visitation is not being held with mother, has agency made reasonable efforts to promote/support such visitation or other contacts?	87.0%
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P31.	If visitation is not being held with father, has agency made reasonable efforts to promote/support such visitation or other contacts?	83.6%
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P32.	If visitation is not being held with the siblings in foster care who were not in the same placement, has the agency made reasonable efforts to promote and support such visitation or other contacts?	76.0%
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PERMANENCY-Preserving Connections

Q#	Question	% of cases in compliance
P33.	Has a lifebook been developed for the child?	82.1%
P34.	If the child is in the Adoption Program, has a copy of the child's lifebook been maintained in the child's case record?	38.7%
P35.	If the child has exited foster care, is there documentation the child or child's caretaker was given the lifebook?	64.1%
P36.	Are the child's cultural ties (e.g. diet, language, community ties, religious beliefs/practices, personal interests, etc.) being preserved in the foster care placement?	94.2%
P37.	If the child is Native American, was the Tribe notified according to the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) guidelines?	100.0%

WELL-BEING-Needs Assessment/Service Provision

Q#	Question	% of cases in compliance
WB1.	Has agency provided periodic review and ongoing assessment of the needs of the family with changes in services made as needed?	97.7%
WB2.	Where service provider reports are missing, have efforts been made by the agency to obtain the reports?	60.7%
WB3.	Has an assessment of the established family relationships of the child been made with parents, grandparents, siblings or adults acting as surrogate parents to determine if the relationship should be preserved while the child is in foster care?	92.2%
WB4.	Was there documentation of a recommendation, submitted at the TPR hearing, regarding whether continuing contact with a parent, sibling, or other biological relative was or was not in the child's best interests?	49.0%

WELL-BEING-Case Planning

Q#	Question	% of cases in compliance
WB5.	Were the child(ren) and parent(s) involved in case planning prior to the Family Team Conference?	66.4%
WB6.	Does the case plan reflect the specific needs of the individual child and services to be provided to meet the child's specific needs?	86.3%
WB7.	Was the foster child's caretaker of residential/TFC provider involved in the case planning prior to the FTC?	72.4%
WB8.	Have the child, biological parents and the child's caretakers been notified of FTC's and court reviews and encouraged to attend?	88.2%

WELL-BEING-Worker Visits

Q#	Question	% of cases in compliance
WB9.	Have visits that were actually held between the caseworker and the child been in accordance with agency policy?	70.0%
WB10.	Have visits that were actually held between the caseworker and the child's mother been in accordance with agency policy?	57.3%
WB11.	Have visits that were actually held between the caseworker and the child's father been in accordance with agency policy?	29.5%
WB12.	Have visits actually held between caseworker and foster child's caretaker or residential/TFC provider been in accordance with agency policy?	82.0%
WB13.	Are there indications that visits and other contacts between the caseworker and the child have focused on case planning, service delivery and accomplishing goals?	88.7%
WB14.	Are there indications that visits and other contacts between the caseworker and the child's mother have focused on case planning, service delivery and accomplishing goals?	86.2%
WB15.	Are there indications that visits and other contacts between the caseworker and the child's father have focused on case planning, service delivery and accomplishing goals?	64.1%

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WB16. Are there indications that visits and other contacts between the caseworker and the child's caretaker have focused on case planning, service delivery and accomplishing goals? **96.0%**

WELL-BEING-Education

Q#	Question	% of cases in compliance
WB17.	Has the child been maintained in the same school placement since entry into foster care?	41.2%
WB18.	Were services provided to children with identified educational or developmental needs?	92.5%
WB19.	Was documentation of the child's educational/developmental progress present in the case record?	89.1%
WB20.	Was foster child's caretaker provided information needed to provide for child's educational/developmental needs upon placement?	88.9%

WELL-BEING-Medical

Q#	Question	% of cases in compliance
WB21.	Is the child's immunization record present in the case record?	76.6%
WB22.	Was foster child's caretaker provided the information necessary to provide for the child's medical needs upon completion?	86.9%
WB23.	Has the child been provided medical care and treatment for all identified medical needs?	96.6%
WB24.	Does the record contain documentation of medical services provided to child?	90.9%

WELL-BEING-Dental

Q#	Question	% of cases in compliance
WB25.	Was the foster child's caretaker provided the information necessary to provide for the child's dental needs upon placement?	82.6%
WB26.	Has the child been provided dental care and treatment for all identified dental needs? (This question is applicable to CPI and FS if related to the reason OCS became involved in the family.)	85.7%
WB27.	Does the record contain documentation of dental services provided to the child?	90.4%

WELL-BEING-Mental Health

Q#	Question	% of cases in compliance
WB28.	Was an initial mental health screening completed within the first 30 days of the child entering foster care?	84.7%
WB29.	Was foster child's caretaker provided information needed to provide for child's mental health needs upon placement?	86.2%
WB30.	Has the child received mental health care and treatment for all identified mental health needs?	90.8%

UNIVERSAL-Case Management

Q#	Question	% of cases in compliance
UQ1.	When necessary were interpreters or translators utilized to promote effective communication in the investigation and/or provision of services to the family?	
UQ2.	Were consents and release of confidentiality waivers obtained when necessary during the investigation and/or provision of services to the family?	76.5%
UQ3.	For all closed cases in CPI, FS, and FC, is there documentation to support planning with the biological family to access services or resources available in the family system or community if needed to prevent recurrence of the abuse or neglect in the future?	78.7%
UQ4.	For all finalized adoptions, is there documentation to support planning with the adoptive family to access services or resources available in the family system or community if needed to support and maintain the adoptive placement?	95.5%

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Title IV-E Eligibility Review and Program Improvement Plan

On July 26 – 30, 2004, a joint federal-state eligibility review of Louisiana’s Title IV-E Foster Care Program was conducted. The review was conducted to determine compliance with the child and provider eligibility requirements, and to validate the accuracy of Louisiana’s IV-E claims for claims made during October 1, 2003 through March 31, 2004. Of the 80 cases reviewed, five were determined to be ineligible. The reasons for ineligibility included: (1) Two cases involved the failure of residential facilities to obtain criminal record clearances on all employees; (2) One case involved a delay in the re-certification of the foster home, and (3) Two cases involved the use of provisional licenses.

The review also identified the following strengths: timely judicial determinations, well documented certifications of foster homes, well organized case files, improved permanency outcomes for children, good placement stability, court orders contained appropriate language, well documented eligibility determinations, and implementation of uniform courts orders by Office of Youth Development (OYD).

Based on the five ineligible cases, Louisiana developed a program improvement plan to address the three areas of ineligibility. The IV-E program improvement plan is a collaborative process of the Bureau of Licensing, OYD, and OCS to correct the findings noted during the review. The IV-E program improvement plan will be implemented May 9, 2005 through May 1, 2006 during which time the identified agencies will engage in specific strategies to assure timely re-certification of foster homes, compliance with criminal record checks by residential facilities, and to discontinue the use of provisional licenses by the Bureau of Licensing. Following the year long implementation, a second review will be held after September 2006.

3.0 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 actions taken to obtain and use input from stakeholders:

- The Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR) is available for review in regional offices, the state library and its 31 repositories statewide and on-line on the DSS internet.
- Select Independent Living providers reviewed the report for the John H. Chafee Independence Program. Comments received were complimentary and no recommendations for improvement were made.
- Federal stakeholder consultation on February 3, March 29, March 30, May 26 and May 27, 2005 to discuss plan development as well as the Program Improvement Plan.
- A public hearing was held on May 20, 2005 and notice of the hearing was published in the Potpourri section of the Louisiana Register and in seven state newspapers; stakeholders, including the four federally recognized American Indian Tribes, were also notified by mail.

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Two individuals attended the public hearing. No written comments were received; however, the individuals in attendance had a variety of questions. First, they were interested in the basic organizational structure of the Agency, including its connection to regions and parishes. They were also interested in basic services, particularly, foster care. Participants also asked about funding for the Children's Justice Act, information on group home rules and an application for becoming a foster parent. Explanations were provided about the organization and services.

- Memoranda of Understanding (MOU)
 1. On August 31, 2004 the Department of Social Services (DSS), Office of Family Support (OFS) and Office of Community Services (OCS) entered into a MOU that enables the use of expenditures of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) for the purpose of continuing initiatives that provide Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) to needy children, in accordance with federal and state regulations. This MOU ratified TANF Goal #1 that stresses providing assistance to needy families so that children can be cared for in their own homes or the homes of relatives.
 2. On December 31, 2004 DSS/OCS and CASA entered into a MOU that facilitates collaboration between the organizations as required in Louisiana's PIP. The goal is to increase identification of potential relative placement resources and permanent contacts for children in foster care in a timely manner. Through the agreement, local and regional DSS/OCS offices and CASA programs will work together and collaboratively search for and identify relative or permanent contact resources for children in foster care. The agreement is limited to foster children with an assigned CASA advocate.
 3. On July 1, 2004 OFS and OCS entered into a MOU that facilitates expenditures of TANF in accordance with federal and state regulations. This MOU is relative to the Developmental and Socialization Activities Program for foster children. The MOU meets TANF Goal #3 to reduce the incidence of out of wedlock pregnancies through provision of developmental and socialization activities for foster children to improve their self-esteem and peer relations. Foster children between the ages of 6 and 17 who are placed in foster homes are served by this MOU.
 4. On January 5, 2005 the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana (located in Avoyelles Parish) and OCS formally agreed that OCS would investigate allegations of child abuse and neglect of children whose families were visiting the Paragon Casino-Resort. The agreement also establishes that investigation of reports of child abuse/neglect involving American Indian children will follow the Indian Child Welfare Act.
 5. On February 23, 2005 DSS and the Chitamacha Tribe of Louisiana entered into a cooperative agreement that establishes and maintains an effective cooperative

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relationship between the Chitimacha Tribe and DSS in order to share responsibilities for the voluntary licensing of child day care facilities on Tribal lands, to share responsibility for inspecting such voluntarily licensed child care facilities and to share client information concerning participants in the Child Care Assistance Program.

6. On May 6, 2005 DSS/OCS and Department of Health and Hospitals, Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD) entered into a MOU that established policies and procedures for referral of children age 3 years and up involved with OCS and who are suspected of having a developmental disability to OCDD. The MOU is intended to facilitate the determination of developmental disability, assessments for supports and services, assistance in locating placements, and joint planning for children who are approaching the age of majority.
 - Quarterly Consumer and Community Committee meetings.
 - Ten focus groups with the judiciary, law enforcement, education system representatives, advocates, service providers, administrative bodies, foster, adoptive and biological families and youth in foster care. Children in OCS custody and OCS staff also engaged in focus groups.
 - Customer satisfaction surveys are administered in OCS offices statewide and through statewide mail-outs.
 - Louisiana Children's Trust Fund/Community Based Family Resource and Support.

During the reporting period, the Louisiana Trust Fund (LCTF) established and sustained 253 programs in the State that delivered life skills and safety programs, parenting support and education programs, hospital/home visitation programs, public awareness/education programs, continued education and training programs.

An estimated 1,268,493 citizens including children, parents, families, adults, and professionals/volunteers received services in the following areas.

1. New Networks and Developments

- Expanded programs to include programming and collaboration with Head Start, Early Head Start, Early Child Care Resource, Parents Anonymous, and Parents as Teachers Programs.
- Established collaborations with the Federation of Churches and Synagogues. This broadened the grass-roots network of community-based churches. The Shreveport Community Renewal Program was supported by the LCTF. Friendship Houses were established for

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resources for children to go and be safe at anytime. The services are provided after school, on weekends, etc.

- Established new programs to address needs of teen parents (Teen Mural Project and Independent Living Skills Programs for Youth).
- A boot camp for dads and the children in the middle programs target the importance of a positive relationship between fathers and their children.
- LCTF funded the Safe Visitation and Child Advocacy Centers, along with LCTF family resource centers, to help with implementation of the Safe Haven Program.
- With Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana (PCAL), LCTF funded the development of regional support networks. These increased public awareness of community-based programs and provide a coordinated development of future programs to meet unmet needs of the population.

2. Comprehensive Needs Assessment, Peer Review, and Parent Leadership

Probably the most exciting development for children's services in the State has been the development of the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems. Through a grant from federal Health Resources and Services Administration and the Department of Health and Hospitals, Office of Public Health, a strategic approach to providers, stakeholders and consumers/parents are brought together to address the challenge of bridging multiple funding streams and forging collaborative partnerships for cross service system integration. The LCTF served on the Parent Education/Family Support Workgroup and on the Early Childhood Comprehensive Services Advisory Group. A comprehensive needs assessment was developed. Peer reviews were then organized with a three tier approach to service providers, stakeholders, and consumers/parents. The process included input from service provider's staff, participants and community stakeholders. A new collaborative was developed for coordinated involvement of the Citizen Review Panels with the network of peer reviews.

The peer review process identified priorities and recommendations for services to children and families. An evaluation survey was done of providers and consumers of LCTF programs. Operational funding, grant process and administration, and other interests were addressed through the surveys. From this survey several changes ensued:

- Special outreach to teen parents and foster parents
- Including parents in leadership roles in LCTF programs to help in deciding future development of LCTF programs
- Including parents on the LCTF Board

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3. Technical Assistance, Evaluation and Public Relations

- Promotion of the LCTF website (lctf.org) was encouraged with all grantees. The Program Evaluation Reports submitted by grantees is done through internet.
- Support was provided from PCAL for any grantee without access to a computer for submission of required reports.
- The project evaluation process includes a self evaluation. Programs describe the process for evaluating their services, proposed outcomes, and the impact of proposed services.
- Two factors are used for the evaluation. They include increased protection and/or decreased risk factors.
- All LCTF programs accessed the grant application materials via website. All LCTF programs by region are now listed on the website.
- LCTF continued the use of video conferencing during the year, including the grant application workshops.
- Contracted with the Louisiana Association of Non-Profits (LANO) to offer training on standards of excellence, accountability, financial management, and fund development.
- Provided stipends to other organizations, conferences and workshops to allow participants to attend. Assisted in attendance at the PCAL and LANO state conferences, School Based Health Centers Conference, Louisiana National Association of Social Workers Conference and the Foster/Adoptive Parent Association.
- Assisted with promotion of the Child Abuse Prevention Month in Louisiana. Coordination with several statewide agencies (PCAL, LANO, Safe Kids Coalitions, and Child Net)
- Assisted in the legislative awareness day as part of Child Abuse Prevention Month.
- Hosted the Prime Time for Parents—“Kidformation” Hour radio program.

4. Development of Systemic Change, Collaboration with Federal Programs and Innovative Funding Mechanisms

The LCTF played an integral role in development of the Early Childhood Comprehensive System. The system is one of many systemic changes child abuse prevention services are experiencing in Louisiana. The reforms include maximizing funding in the contest of tight fiscal situations and required changes. These include:

- Implementation of the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2003
- Implementation of the D SS No Wrong Door legislation

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- Support for the implementation of a regional and statewide information and referral telephone system, known as the 211 phone connection to services and referrals.
- LCTF continued to play an active role in the Governor's Children's Cabinet. LCTF has incorporated Children's Cabinet recommendations into new grant applications to move the recommendations to the community level and integrate these into the LCTF activities and funded programs.
- LCTF participated in the formation of the DSS PIP. Collaboration on the PIP, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), further implementation of the requirements of the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) was done during the report year.
- LCTF funds are used to fund the "Don't Kid Around" campaign, which is an educational outreach project to increase public awareness regarding the need for increased use and proper use of child safety seats and seat belts. The efforts are targeted to actual drivers who transport small children in an unsafe and unrestrained manner.

2005 Legislative Session:

During the compilation of this report the legislature was in session. DSS put forward and/or supported several measures that included:

- The inclusion of child abuse and neglect prevention services in OCS mandate. This addition would impact the Family Services Program and agency focus, priority and emphasis. It is hoped that the addition of this language into the Agency's mission will increase access to foundation support, grants and related alternative funding sources.
- A measure to allow OCS to designate specific staff with the authority and responsibility to share limited information on certain child abuse and neglect investigations. This measure allows for clarification of media reports in child/abuse neglect cases and would balance the protection of confidential information with being able to respond to inquires of mandated reporters and the media.
- Incorporation of Child Abuse Prevention Treatment Act (CAPTA) requirements regarding certain newborns affected by the illegal use of a controlled, dangerous substance or withdrawal symptoms resulting from prenatal exposure.
- A measure to reconcile differences in state statutes with regard to expungement of case record information.
- A measure that would increase the penalties for attacks on agency staff and/or Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) staff. (Sponsored by National Association of Social Workers.)

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4.0 Indian Child Welfare Act and Tribal Collaboration

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

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

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

On-Going Collaboration/Coordination with American Indian Tribes

- OCS has policies and practices governing case planning, service delivery, family preservation and family support services. Tribal notifications, Tribal jurisdiction, foster care placement, termination of parental rights, pre-adoptive placement and adoptive placement.
- Respect for and protection of the cultural heritage and best interest of American Indians.
- Ongoing staff training on the exclusive rights of American Indian Tribes such as notice of state proceedings and special preference for the placement of American Indian children.
- Formal and informal working agreements with American Indian Tribes.
- Ongoing relationship with the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs.
- Ongoing American Indian participation on the OCS Community and Consumers Committee.
- Participation in regional Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) processes.
- Request for participation in the development of the 2005 APSR.

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- Inclusion of American Indian Tribal staff in regularly scheduled OCS training.

In February 2005 OCS entered into an agreement with the Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana that is located in Charenton. While the agreement focused on the licensing of the Tribe's childcare facility, the agreement also provided that complaints of child abuse and neglect concerning the Tribe's child care center would be referred to OCS for investigation. Along with this agreement, OCS has initiated contacts with the Tribes designed to address the basic provisions of ICWA and any concerns of the Tribes about OCS application of the Act's provisions.

A meeting was held on April 18, 2005, that included the social service directors of the four federally recognized Tribes, OCS program staff, the DSS Bureau of Licensing Director, and the Governor's representative for Indian Affairs. The basic provisions of ICWA were covered as follows:

First, OCS policy provides that staff identifies any children who are American Indian. The social service directors expressed concern that some children are not initially being identified as American Indian. They suggested that training and policy should stress the need to routinely inquire about Tribal membership during the investigative process. They also thought that judges could inquire at court hearings.

Second, the Tribes' social service directors generally described OCS as notifying Indian parents and the Tribes of state proceedings involving Indian children and their right to intervene once the Agency recognized they were working with an American Indian child. At the same time, they noted that a contract with the Bureau of Indian Affairs requires monitoring of American Indian families who are in OCS service and/or custody. Sometimes OCS does not provide information on important matters such as family team conferences and court hearings. Ideas for improvement were discussed, as was the OCS independent living program, including designating a staff person in regional OCS offices who would serve as a contact person.

Third, OCS policy recognizes the special placement preferences for Indian children. Nonetheless, problems have arisen over foster parent and kinship placements with American Indian families. One problem is described as dual certification; that is, both OCS and a Tribe have certified a family as a foster parent. OCS has shown a hesitation to place children in dually certified homes. Another issue has been that some American Indian families have been denied certification to foster or adopt based on their inability to meet some licensing standards. OCS is looking into these issues and will clarify policy on these matters by November 2005.

Fourth, the Agency seeks to provide services to prevent the breakup of Indian families. Limitations exist in the availability of services, particularly since the Tribes are located in rural areas. However, at this meeting, OCS presented information about the development of prevention services, in particular a new program called Nurturing Parents. Tribal representatives were invited to take part in planned training and in the use of the program. (Training should be conducted by December 31, 2005.)

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Fifth, OCS recognizes in policy the right of Tribal courts and their jurisdiction. Tribal social service directors noted that normally the Tribal courts allow the local state courts to proceed. However, it was noted that they feel OCS needs to provide their courts with more information for them to make informed decisions. Further, there are situations where the Tribal court has decided a child needs to be in care and there are no available Indian foster parents. Tribes would like to retain jurisdiction while the child was placed in an OCS foster home. The OCS policy section will review this matter.

Additionally, Tribal consultation was obtained via review of the 2005 – 2009 Child and Family Services Plan as well as a draft of the 2005 APSR. Comments were requested by June 14, 2005 and incorporated into the plan where applicable and appropriate.

As OCS seeks to carry out ICWA policy, it also provides a comprehensive system to meet the needs of all families including American Indian families. The Agency maintains a statewide information system (currently Tracking Information Payment System [TIPS]), a case review system, and a service program designed to improve safety, permanency and well being of children. OCS plans to continue consultation with the Tribes to address the issues discussed in the April 2005 meeting. A follow up meeting is planned for November 2005 at the Coshatta Indian reservation.

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5.0 Court Improvement Project

The information below details efforts of the Court Improvement Project (CIP) in SFY 2004 – 2005 and provides updates on the implementation of the recommendations developed from the CFSR site visits and the final report.

- Court delays and ensuring adequacy of hearings.

Update: With respect to reducing delays and ensuring the adequacy of hearings and court orders, the CIP, with the advice and counsel of its Advisory Committee, is drafting uniform court rules for child in need of care cases. These proposed rules will then be presented to the Chief Justice for action by the Supreme Court.

The Louisiana Task Force on Legal Representation in child protection proceedings is addressing access to qualified, competent legal counsel for children. This group, created by state legislation in 2003, consists of representatives from the CIP, state child welfare agency, the Louisiana Bar Association, CASA, Louisiana law schools, and other child welfare stakeholders. The Task Force has completed work on a set of attorney standards for attorneys representing children. These standards have been presented to the Supreme Court for official action, with the hope that the standards will be made mandatory rather than aspirational. The Task Force is being extended legislatively to conduct follow-up activity on the children's attorney standards and to consider standards for parents' attorneys and, possibly, agency attorneys.

The CIP has provided support to the Louisiana Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Association for its annual conference. This action was necessary due to loss of TANF funding. The CIP will partner with CASA to provide regional training opportunities statewide for child welfare stakeholders, including attorneys, CASA, agency staff, foster parents, judges and others. The curriculum will include state and federal law and regulations, early childhood and adolescent development and training on relevant court rules and procedures.

Other issues are still being considered by the Child Advocacy Resource Efforts (CARE) Advisory Committee and will be more fully addressed in the CIP Reassessment Report.

- Attorney standards

Update: The attorney standards for representation of children were presented to the Supreme Court on June 14, 2005. The hope is that the standards will be made mandatory when they are next discussed on June 21, 2005.

- Status of the Integrated Juvenile Justice Information System (IJJIS)

Update: Work is nearing completion on the revised functional IJJIS. The system specifications document was completed on March 31, 2005. The CIP expects to solicit bids on the programming shortly thereafter, with the goal of having a product to beta test in July or August 2005.

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- Curriculum for continuing education of judges

Update: Various training opportunities for the continuing education of judges will include state and federal law and regulations, early and/or adolescent childhood development, information on the standards for attorneys representing children (when adopted), best practices for improved court performance regarding Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) implementation, introduction to the Bench Cards for Essential Judicial Functions and other topics as indicated.

- Mediation Pilot Program

Update: Major grant funding for the Mediation Pilot will end June 30, 2005. The CIP is working with the two pilot sites to ensure funding for the continuation of the programs. To date, the program has served over 100 children and families and has met or exceeded all of its initial goals. Both Orleans and Jefferson Parish Juvenile Courts have agreed to provide continuation support beyond the pilot period. The CIP is working to expand the program into other state courts. The evaluation is in progress and will be completed by June 30, 2005. A copy of the evaluation report will be available for review.

- Child and Family Services Review (CFSR)/Program Improvement Plan (PIP)

Update: CIP assisted in arranging stakeholder interviews for the onsite review. In addition, the CIP coordinator participated as an on-site case reviewer. CIP offered to provide legal assistance if needed, although no requests were made. CIP staff was interviewed.

The CIP coordinator participated actively in PIP development by serving on the committee dealing with the issue of timely adoption. CIP is responsible for 2 items in the PIP: promulgation and implementation of attorney standards for children's attorneys and judicial/stakeholder education. CIP was an active partner in the development of the PIP.

6.0 Children's Justice Act

The activities and accomplishments outlined in this section represent work done in the 2004 – 2005 SFY.

- Sponsored the statewide "Together We Can" child welfare conference in October 2004. The conference provided seminar tracks for lawyers, social workers, and law enforcement personnel. Over 300 persons participated. They included 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.
- Aided the Louisiana CASA Association by providing training and assistance to local CASA programs. Provided funding for start up and development costs for 2

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newly developed CASA programs. Over 1,500 children were represented by CASA.

- Assisted the Children's Advocacy Centers (CAC) of Louisiana to provide training and assistance to local CAC's. Provided funding for 4 newly developed or expanding Children's Advocacy Centers where child friendly forensic interviews are conducted. Over 1,000 children were interviewed in a CAC setting.
- Provided funding for 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. The project provided 78 mediations for 68 child in need of care cases.
- Provided funding for several training sessions for OCS staff and support personnel in the "Family Group Decision Making" model. This model promotes the development of case plans with more family input to achieve better outcomes. Over 100 persons received the training.
- Provided funding to coordinate the Louisiana Child Death Review Panels in North Louisiana. Twelve panels were held that reviewed over thirty child deaths. Also provided funding for the training of four local child death investigation panel members.
- Provided start up funding to develop an Infant Team program model to promote the handling of child abuse and neglect cases that limits additional trauma to the child victim, especially children under 4 years of age. The model will be used as a guide for other jurisdictions in the State to develop Infant Team programs.
- Helped to sponsor research of the child protection system to make recommendations regarding laws dealing with child abuse. The recommendations were considered for inclusion in the Children's Code.
- Monitored 15 contracts funded through the Children's Justice Act Grant and conducted on-site reviews to ensure compliance with grant guidelines and to promote quality services.

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7.0 Technical Assistance

The Federal Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, makes available to states an array of national child welfare resource centers whose purpose is to provide states with training and technical assistance to implement PIP related projects. During the report period, Louisiana accessed several of the centers in close coordination with ACF Regional Office, Thurston "TJ" Jones, federal program officer. A summary of the Department's use of these resources is as follows:

1. The **National Child Welfare Resource Center for Child Maltreatment** provided in-state technical assistance in July 2004 (one day), August (two days), and September (two days). The focus was on strategies to improve safety outcomes. Training was also provided. Case plan formats for the Family Service Program cases were also reviewed as was the case staffing form. Next, maltreatment of children in foster care was examined as to the current procedures and assessments of safety at the point of placement as well as at routine points after initial placement has been made. A standardized case contact form was developed and distributed to all OCS offices for general use. Safety factors were identified and added to the contact form. The consultant provided off-site review of all revised formats and provided feedback. Primary Consultant: Theresa Costello

2. The Children and Domestic Violence Project of the American Bar Association, via the **National Child Welfare Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues** provided one day of technical assistance to the Department in January 2005. This focused on bringing together state partners in domestic violence and the development of a responsive curriculum on domestic violence for child welfare workers and collaborators in this area. Also, the consultation focused on development of screening questions for various points of time in the life of a case. Primary Consultant: Rachel Feldheim, Director of Children and Domestic Violence Project of the ABA

3. The **NCANDS TA (National Child Abuse Neglect Data System Technical Assistance) Team** provided technical assistance for two days in December 2005. Assistance focused on addressing problems related to NCANDS submission of data from Louisiana and helping make recommendations for the groundwork drafting of the Louisiana data system (ACCESS) NCANDS mapping. This technical assistance brought together national experts with departmental staff in child welfare and data management to focus on current and future projects and initiatives. The NCANDS TA Team has volunteered to transpose the Louisiana mapping of data for the 2004 NCANDS submission onto current mapping forms. Primary Consultants: Myles Edwards, PhD, Mr. Sunil Leelaram

NOTE: In addition, the Agency provided training to staff statewide on understanding the PIP outcomes. A total of 13 different sessions with 195 staff were held. Staff learned to review and understand data to strategically address PIP outcomes on statewide and worker levels. Additional training sessions may be held bringing the total to exceed 200 participants.

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4. The **National Council of State Legislatures** provided technical assistance to the State in February 2005. Mr. Steve Christian testified to the Louisiana Joint Committees of the Health and Welfare Committee's Task Force on Foster Care. His expert testimony provided a discussion of how well Louisiana is serving children who are in foster care placement. Primary focus: educational needs of foster children, i.e., maintaining the same school when possible between placements for stability and special education needs considerations for those children aging out of foster care. He also provided testimony on the CFSR and the PIP. The primary reason the State asked for technical assistance was to help state legislators understand foster care funding issues and needs. It is anticipated that Mr. Christian will be asked to return to meet with a larger group of legislators to reinforce foster care needs and help with funding support in the future.
Primary Consultant: Mr. Steve Christian

8.0 Research and Evaluation

OCS has identified several needs that are in the process of being addressed in the area of research and evaluation. These are summarized as follows:

- Staff identified a need for research to help the Agency develop improved plans for children in state custody who are in residential care settings. The interest is in assisting these children to live in a family setting and continue to have the structured and therapeutic environment benefits that their condition warrants. Over the years, the population being served by the residential providers has exhibited extreme changes. Currently, the children entering the foster care system who require residential services and staffing are children with dual diagnoses (e.g., mental retardation/developmental disabilities and mental illness; chronic patterns of aggressiveness and violence against others; delinquency; self injuring behaviors; multiple unsuccessful placements; substance abuse; sexually transmitted diseases; multiple diagnoses, runaway behavior patterns). OCS is requiring residential providers to meet these needs and provide for the safety needs of the residents simultaneously.

The research interest focuses on keeping providers abreast of current methodologies and resources to achieve treatment goals while protecting the child. This request is pending, although telephone consultation has occurred with at least one of the national resource centers available for assistance. This initiative will more than likely carry over into the next reporting year.

- Research has also been planned and is in its initial stages to help the Agency develop a clearer, more detailed picture of the children and families being served. Once complete, resources can be developed around the State to appropriately meet their needs. At present, primarily demographic information is gathered on the clients served by the Agency. This data is broad and unspecific in terms of the reasons for involvement with families. Recently, OCS has noted a trend in the increase of teens

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coming into state custody primarily to receive mental health treatment or because the teens are assumed to be “uncontrollable.”

The research interest is in development of an in-depth study of the needs of children in state custody. This will allow more meaningful discussions with other agencies that have the skill and expertise to address the presenting and underlying problems this unique client population possesses. Increased effectiveness of interventions is the ultimate goal of this initiative. A national resource center is also being requested to assist with this research. Like the previous initiative, this will likely carry over into the next year’s report.

The initiatives may be combined at some point to increase comprehensiveness and efficiency.

9.0 Information Management System

The ACCESS (A Comprehensive Enterprise Social Services System) project continues its progress toward implementation. On September 19, 2005 a 45-day pilot will be initiated in Tangipahoa Parish for the child protection investigation program. Statewide implementation is scheduled for November 1, 2005. ACCESS team members continue to review and guide development for all phases of implementation. Meanwhile, the Agency continues to operate under it’s current information management system {i.e. Tracking Information Payment System (TIPS)}.

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10. Child Welfare Continuum – This section contains information on the Child Welfare service continuum, the Agency’s efforts to achieve the goals of safety, permanency and well-being and the barriers and challenges impacting goal attainment.

CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES

Goal: Safety

Ongoing Services to Achieve Goals: Public awareness; intake of reports; investigation of reports; determining risk; ensuring safety by provision of services, making decisions on the report’s validity, and taking appropriate legal action; providing follow up services; and Quality Assurance reviews.

Performance Achievement:

Child Protection Investigation (CPI) services are specialized services designed to provide social service investigative assistance for children who are alleged to be neglected, abused, exploited, or dependent. Several factors continue to drive ongoing efforts to improve safety for children and services for families. They include: the CFSR, the PIP, the Agency’s Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process, and the Quality Assurance (QA) system. Listed in the chart below are some policy and practice changes undertaken for improved safety of children.

Date	Performance/Achievements/Changes to Policy & Practice
March and June 2004, and April 2005	<p>PPM 04 – 05 Paper Work Reduction Pilot Project The pilot project was implemented in Jefferson, Covington and Monroe regions to improve the quality and efficiency of the documentation and processing of information in child protection investigations. An evaluation was conducted in June 2004, which included the review of ten to twelve cases in each region. Supervisors and workers were also interviewed. The review indicated that forms were completed timely with signatures by supervisors and workers. Risk factors appeared to be considered and checked off appropriately. In cases involving the removal of the child, the necessary documentations were completed. In addition, staff viewed the form as positive for the following reasons: less repetition; less time to complete; easier to complete; and easy monitoring tool for supervisors. At the same time, staff thought a number of instructions were not clear and the order of some information could be revised. In April 2005, suggestions were incorporated in a revised form. Plans are to implement the form in other regions.</p>
July 2004	<p>PPM 04 – 11 sup 1. Retention of Information on Child Protection Investigations with Invalid Final Findings The Louisiana legislature amended Act 457 regarding to the maintenance of information on investigations with invalid or inconclusive final findings. With either of these final findings, this information will be maintained for seven years. This action by the Legislature will aid the Agency’s efforts at</p>

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Date	Performance/Achievements/Changes to Policy & Practice
	protecting children, and will allow the Agency access to child abuse and neglect history for risk assessment purposes.
July 2004	<p>PPM 04 – 10 Safe Haven Relinquishments</p> <p>Policy was issued to advise staff of provisions of the Louisiana’s Children’s Code and agency policy regarding relinquishments of infants thirty days or younger – the Safe Haven Act. The role of the Child Protection investigative staff was delineated. For example, it clarifies that, unlike a typical abandonment, the worker is not to attempt to locate the parent, but will do a diligent search for the non-relinquishing parent. The policy also addressed the roles of foster care and adoption in the placement of the relinquished infant. Meanwhile, the Agency continues its collaboration with other agencies to make known the provisions of the Safe Haven Act. In state fiscal year 2004, the Louisiana legislature allocated \$75,000 for the further promotion of the Safe Haven Legislation. With that, OCS entered into a contract with Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana (PCAL) to promote safe havens by educating the public statewide about the existence of this law as well as teaching designated emergency care facilities about their responsibilities should they receive a relinquished infant. Before the start of this campaign no relinquishment had occurred. Since the start of the public awareness campaign, three safe haven relinquishments have occurred.</p>
September 2004	<p>Policy 4 – 800 Concrete Services/Service provision by the CPI Worker</p> <p>The Agency strengthened policy concerning the role of staff in providing services to families in the course of the investigative phase of casework. These services are to be provided for families where a referral to further agency service in other programs will be made and also in situations where the investigative case will be closed. While staff has always provided a variety of services to families, this new policy stresses that referral services should be considered regardless of the validity of the allegations. Safety, permanency, and well being of the children are the criteria used. Several services are highlighted for referral: Regional Child Welfare Family Resource Centers provide services for family support; and in cases of a child under three years of age who has been neglected or abused, referral is made to the Early Intervention Program, Early Steps, as required by the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). Even if there is no valid case but there are circumstances that may place a child at risk for a developmental delay, policy directs that a referral should be made.</p>
October 2004	In an effort to improve the timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment, the Child Protection program developed an oversight and tracking system. A monthly report was also developed that provides information on response time policy compliance in emergency, high priority and non-emergency cases.

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Date	Performance/Achievements/Changes to Policy & Practice
October 2004 and February 2005	RAM 04 – 108; RAM 04-110; and RAM 05 – 007 Staff attended several conferences where they acquired valuable information. Staff members attended the Louisiana Foundation Against Sexual Assault training, Louisiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence Conference in September 2004, the Together We Can Conference, and the Infant Mental Health Conference in October 2004. In February 2005, staff attended the 19 th Annual Kids Are Worth It Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect and the state CASA Conference.
December 2004	The CPI program supports and participates in the state legislatively mandated Louisiana Sexual Assault Task Force, which is a multi-disciplinary group charged with the responsibility to improve the investigation and services to sexual assault victims.
January 2005	The CPI program obtained technical assistance from Rachel Feldheim, the American Bar Association’s Children and the Law, and the National Child Welfare Resource Center on domestic violence issues. Ms. Feldheim provided one day of in-person technical assistance and numerous hours of telephone and e-mail technical assistance throughout this year. We continue to seek technical assistance from both Ms. Feldheim and Angela Clark of the Louisiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence.
February 2005	RAM 04 – 101 Coordinated Effort in Child Protection Investigations – Nurse Assessment Collaborative Contents of the agreement between Office of Public Health (OPH) and OCS were identified. OPH will provide a nurse to assess CPI investigations involving the following allegations of children under age five: failure to thrive; fetal alcohol syndrome/chemically exposed infants; malnutrition/starvation; and medical neglect. The agreement is pending the signature of OPH’s Assistant Secretary. The process will be implemented when the agreement is signed.
February 2005	Expansion of Family Group Decision Making (Regional Administrator Memorandum 05-019) This memorandum relates to safety, permanency and well being of children in foster care as it expands the Family Group Decision Making process into two additional regions (Shreveport and Lafayette), and this process engages extended family and other persons closely connected to the family in assuring safety, permanency, and well being of foster children in placement, independent living and/or upon return home.
March 2005	PPM 05 – 003 Screening of OCS Clients for Substance Abuse, Mental Illness and Violence This policy seeks to improve case practice by screening for possible substance abuse, mental illness and domestic violence and provides the GAIN - Short Screener tools for staff use.
April 2005	PPM 05 – 006 Form 97 Emergency Placement Agreement This policy and procedure was developed after field staff requested a form that could be given to foster parents during emergency removal and placement by CPI and FS staff.

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Date	Performance/Achievements/Changes to Policy & Practice
June 2005	The Louisiana Legislature amended the Children’s Civil Code, Article 603 relative to the definition of neglect to include certain newborns affected by the illegal use of a controlled dangerous substance or withdrawal symptoms resulting from prenatal exposure. The change to Article 603 brought Louisiana law into compliance with a 2003 Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) amendment that requires states to develop policies and procedures to address the needs of infants born and identified as being affected by prenatal illegal substance exposure.

Barriers/Challenges Impacting Goal Attainment:

Neglect accounts for 70% of the abuse and neglect allegations in Louisiana. Many factors affect the incidence of neglect:

- Children living at or below the poverty line are 40 times more likely to be harmed by physical neglect than children who live at the median income level. (Dr. Sandra Bloom, The Neglect of Neglect). According to the U. S. Census, 25% of Louisiana’s children live below the poverty level. The challenge is to move these children out of poverty, and subsequently reduce the likelihood the child will be neglected.
- Poverty alone does not account for the incidence of neglect. The community and culture of tolerance of child neglect is a barrier to increasing the safety of children in these families. Early intervention services are key to making a difference. However, many of the early intervention services are suffering from funding cutbacks.

Practice and policy related to the CPI intake process are in need of enhancement:

- CPI intake function is currently just one duty of CPI workers. The professionalization of the intake process is key to building rapport with mandated reporters.
- A strengths-based, professional model of intake would increase the quality and quantity of the information obtained and would result in better intake decisions.

Another huge barrier to ensuring the safety of children is the scarcity of substance abuse, mental health, and domestic violence resources in our state. The Assistant Secretary of the Office of Addictive Disorders testified in a legislative hearing that his agency is budgeted at a level that only addresses 7% of the need. The Office of Mental Health restricts intake to suicidal, homicidal, and gravely disabled patients. Domestic violence programs are in their infancy in this state. The challenge to our Department is to provide assistance to clients who often have these serious high-risk problems.

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CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT PREVENTION, INTERVENTION, AND TREATMENT

Goal 1: To obtain legislative authority and appropriation to expand DSS/OCS statutory mission statement to include child abuse and neglect prevention services by Fiscal Year 2007.

Ongoing Services to Achieve the Goal: N/A

Date	Performance/Achievement/Changes to Policy and Practices
March 2005	OCS proposed legislation adding prevention services to the statutory mission of OCS. The legislation passed and was subsequently added to the mission statement of OCS.

Barriers/Challenges Impacting Goal Attainment

Although the legislature expanded the mission statement to include child abuse and neglect prevention, no money was appropriated in the budget for this purpose.

Goal 2: To develop a preliminary agenda for incorporating primary prevention into the continuum of child welfare services.

Ongoing Services to Achieve the Goal:

Continue work on developing partnerships with federal, state, and community agencies to fund and implement child abuse and neglect prevention efforts throughout Louisiana.

Date	Performance/Achievement/Changes to Policy and Practices
March 1, 2005	Cost/benefit analysis information regarding various child abuse/neglect prevention initiatives was gathered and compiled for review by OCS administration and the state legislature.
	Information is being gathered on specific, evidenced-based, prevention programs for consideration within Louisiana. The plan is to develop and implement at least one primary prevention program by 2007 and evaluate by 2010. the first phase (literature review) is due to be completed by December 2005.
	The final component in developing a preliminary agenda for child abuse/neglect prevention is the identification of potential funding resources. A core workgroup has been established to research grant opportunities for funding prevention initiatives. Future plans include developing a grant writing team, and developing and implementing a grant writing campaign.

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Barriers/Challenges Impacting Goal Attainment:

The biggest challenge we face in taking on the additional focus of prevention, is educating everyone involved in the continuum of child welfare services, as to the critical importance of prevention and early intervention. It will require a shift in thinking; OCS now has the ability to be proactive rather than only reactive. It will require that staff and stakeholders embrace the idea of OCS being a true partner in preventing child abuse and neglect.

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FAMILY SERVICES

Goal: Safety and Permanency

Ongoing Services to Achieve Goals: Assessment of family needs; provision of services; referral to appropriate agencies for services; on going assessment of risk; and referrals for aftercare services.

Performance Achievement:

Family services are social services provided to families and children to address problems of abuse and neglect and promote the safety of the children living with their families, relatives, or another person, while remaining in the custody of their parents. Several forces are working to continue the drive to improve services. They include the CFSR, the PIP, the CQI process, and QA. Listed in the chart below are some policy and practice changes undertaken to improve safety and permanency for children.

Date	Performance/Achievements/Changes to Policy & Practice
August 2004	<p>PPM 04-14 Revised Family Services, Foster Care, and Adoption Caseload Standards Effective July 1, 2004, the new caseload standard for the FS program family was changed to 15 families. The intent of this new caseload standard is to allow family service workers more time to meet the specific needs of individual families. When Family Service caseloads are too large, the staff is not able to assist families as well, which can result in new reports and possible placement in foster care.</p>
September 2004	<p>Policy Section 5-430 B, D, H Policy was revised to allow greater access to funds in the Preventive Assistance program (PAF). These funds are designed to deal with emergencies wherein if the funds were not made available substantial harm may result to the children and/or the children would be removed from the home with out the assistance. The PAF program was extended to permit contract providers of intensive home-based services (IHBS) to utilize the fund for the above purpose.</p>
December 2004	<p>RAM 04-122 Child Adolescent Response Team (CART) CART is a new program offered through the Office of Mental Health and it is designed to assist children and their caretakers during times of crisis by providing short-term support for the family in their resolution of the crisis. The service is available 24 hours a day and is limited to seven days. The CART program represents a cooperative use of services within state government departments and can be a real aid in a variety of situations including family services along with foster care settings.</p>

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Date	Performance/Achievements/Changes to Policy & Practice
December 2004	<p>PPM 04-19 and OCS Program Policy Manual, Chapter 5 Section 5-205 In order to carry out provisions of the Program Improvement Plan (PIP), policy was clarified and revised in two areas for the Family Service program. First, worker contacts with the family were clarified as to topics covered during visits. Topics should include reviewing the case plan, discussing the effectiveness of services, obtaining input on case goals and actions, and completing ongoing assessments of risk and safety and family needs. Second, policy was clarified concerning a family member who may be unavailable for monthly face-to-face contacts because work takes them out of town for long periods or because of military assignment. In such situations, staff should contact the family member by phone, e-mail, or mail if possible to engage them in the monthly visits.</p>
January 2005	<p>RAM 05 –005 Healthy Marriage-Knapsack Project Training As part of OCS’ continued effort to take part in the National Healthy Marriage Initiative, some staff was trained on the Knapsack project and on its features of improving communication about child care issues between couples or separated parents and thereby reduce the risk of child maltreatment.</p>
January 2005	<p>RAM 05 – 15 Mentoring Children of Prisoners In OCS’ continued efforts to utilize community resources effectively for families, staff was advised about local agencies across the State that have received federal grants to provide mentoring to children whose parents are incarcerated. Staff was encouraged to explore this area with families that have incarcerated parents. This effort also represents another OCS effort to collaborate and work with other agencies in providing services for families.</p>
February 2005	<p>RAM 05 – 019 Expansion of Family Group Decision Making The Family Group Making Program has been added to the regions of Lafayette and Shreveport. This program provides these regions with an effective planning process for helping a family think through their involvement with OCS and their efforts to deal with issues of safety, permanency, and well being for their children.</p>
April 2005	<p>PPM 05 – 004 Risk Assessment with Family Services Cases This PPM advises staff of new policy for the documentation of risk assessment for FS cases. It is hoped that this will reduce duplication of documentation and improve the risk assessment process.</p>
April 2005	<p>PPM 05 – 006 Form 97, Emergency Placement Agreement This policy and procedure was developed after field staff requested a form that could be given to foster parents during the emergency removal and placement of children by CPI and FS staff.</p>

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Barriers/Challenges Impacting Goal Attainment:

Over the past year, 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. Many of our most valuable services such as Intensive In-Home services, Protective Day Care, and In-home Therapeutic services, are extremely limited.

While we have been able to expand Family Group Decision Making to two additional regions, we have not been able to expand Project Safe, as we had hoped to, due to limited staff and financial resources.

We are also increasingly becoming involved with Families in Need of Services (FINS) cases through court orders, and this population brings unique challenges and service needs which we are working to address.

Finally, the limited number of staff that we are able to allocate to the Family Service Program dictates that we serve the most high-risk families. We have reduced the caseload standard to 15 families, but considering the complexity and high-risk issues within these families, adequately serving them remains a significant challenge.

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FOSTER CARE/HOME DEVELOPMENT

Goals: Safety, Permanency, Well being

Ongoing Services to Achieve Goals: Outreach, recruitment, retention, health and mental health assessments and treatment, reunification assistance and concurrent planning, program evaluation, collaboration, training, use of contract services

Performance/Achievement:

The Agency is constantly working to improve the safety, permanency and well being of children in the care and custody of the State. Since the development of the five year Child and Family Service Plan numerous policies, procedures and practices have been created, reinforced and implemented to enhance service delivery. These changes and achievements are listed in the chart below.

Date	Performance/Achievements/Changes to Policy & Practice
July 2004	Replacement Prevention (Chapter 6, Sections 1205 and 1615) This policy was revised to prevent replacement of children in foster care by increasing the payment level of one-to-one sitters to provide intervention for children in foster homes to \$5.15 per hour.
July 2004	Child Safety Practice Pointer (Adm. Memorandum 04-16) This practice pointer was issued to increase the level of safety and reduce the possibility of repeat maltreatment in foster homes. Workers were reminded of the importance of visits with foster children and foster parents or caretakers as required by Chapter 6, Part 9, Section, 905, Part A, and provided with 10 ideas for assuring the safety of children in foster care.
July 2004	Recreation, Transitional, and Orthodontic Services (Policy/Procedure Memorandum 04-12) This policy advised agency staff that budgetary reductions require re-prioritization of agency services, and that all recreational funding was eliminated. Limited socialization and developmental activities continue to be available for ages 0-6 through state funds and for ages 6-17 through TANF funds. Transitional services for children exiting foster care were eliminated, and orthodontic services were limited to children with a diagnosis of Class II or III malocclusion.
August 2004	Recreation, Developmental and Socialization Activities (Chapter 6, Sections 960, 962, and 963) These changes reflect policy adaptation to the budgetary reductions imposed in July 2004. Policy regarding recreation, developmental, and socialization activities was removed (Section 960), and policy details were provided for developmental or socialization activities for children under age 6 (Section 962) and for children ages 6-17 (Section 963).

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Date	Performance/Achievements/Changes to Policy & Practice
August 2004	<p>Sexual Abusers Treatment Conference (Regional Administrators' Memorandum 04-95)</p> <p>Staff was encouraged to attend a conference on sexual abuse assessment, treatment, and program development. Information provided at this conference could be helpful to staff in permanency planning for foster children who were victims of sexual abuse.</p>
August 2004	<p>Revised Caseload Standards (Policy/Procedure Memorandum 04-14)</p> <p>The caseload standard for foster care workers was changed to 10 children placed in foster homes and Young Adult Program or 15 children placed in Alternate Family Care Homes, residential facilities, and available for adoption. The worker assigned to the foster child remains responsible to provide services to the family unless the case is carried in a different region.</p>
August 2004	<p>Louisiana Foster Parents Conference (Regional Administrator Memorandum 04-90)</p> <p>The Agency supported the annual Foster Parents Conference scheduled for September 2004 in Baton Rouge. The theme of the conference was "Dancing with Permanency" and it was intended to provide staff and foster parents with skills, resources and supports to jointly achieve permanency for children in foster care.</p>
August 2004	<p>Qualifications of the Foster and Adoptive Parents (Chapter 9, Section 210)</p> <p>This policy was updated regarding the use of Printrak to obtain fingerprints of prospective foster/adoptive families within the Agency and for private providers to obtain state police and FBI criminal record clearances in order to assure the safety of children in these homes and to facilitate efforts to accomplish the certification of foster/adoptive families more expediently.</p>
September 2004	<p>Transportation Expenditures for Foster Children (Chapter 6, Section 630)</p> <p>This policy revision relates to permanency and well being for children who might be placed with friends or relatives who live out-of-state and included clarification of the procedure for requesting approval for out-of-state travel and expenses.</p>
September 2004	<p>Professional Responsibilities of Foster and Adoptive Parents (Chapter 9, Section 220)</p> <p>This section was revised to state the timeframe for foster/adoptive parents to submit requests for reimbursement of expenditures and transportation costs to the child's worker.</p>
September 2004	<p>Minimum Elements in a Recruitment Plan (Chapter 9, Section 305)</p> <p>This section was revised to update the allowable payment amount for meals for annual foster parent appreciation events.</p>
September 2004	<p>Recruitment/Retention Plan Guide (Chapter 9, Appendix B)</p> <p>This appendix was updated to reflect the available per-meal funding for recruitment/retention foster/adoptive parent appreciation event.</p>

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Date	Performance/Achievements/Changes to Policy & Practice
September 2004	Incidental Expenses (Chapter 6, Section 935) This policy addresses the well being of children by assuring that a mechanism exists to provide items for foster children that are not otherwise included in policy. It was revised to restructure the listing of item examples of allowable incidental expenditures made on behalf of children in foster care.
September 2004	Travel and the Foster Child (Chapter 6, Section 935) This policy was revised to include a reorganization of the worker's duties related to travel involving a foster child.
September 2004	Clinical Evaluation Program (CEP) Transition (Policy/Procedure Memorandum 04-15) This policy addresses mental health needs, and it informs agency staff that the Clinical Evaluation Program managed by LSU HSC is being eliminated in October 2004 due to budgetary constraints, and provides information on assessment of mental health needs and alternate payment methods for therapeutic services previously covered by CEP. Foster Care Policy, Chapter 6, sections affected by this change includes 225, 230, 702, 915, 1125, and 1130. Additionally, Forms CE-1, CE-2, CE-3, CE-4, and CE-5 were developed or revised to incorporate this policy change.
September 2004	OCS Form YAP 2 and Instructions (Chapter 25, Form YAP 2) OCS Form YAP 2 was developed as a flyer for use in informing foster children 16 years of age and older about the opportunity to join the Young Adult Program when they become 18 years old. The flyer is intended to provide the youth a clear understanding of the requirements of the program, the youth's responsibilities to participate in the program, and the services available through the program. The worker is to document providing this information in the youth's case record and case plan.
October 2004	Caseload Size and Caseload Coverage (Chapter 6, Section 635) This policy relates to caseload size and assures the safety of children in foster care by requiring that each case is always assigned (for example, when a worker leaves the agency). It was updated to reflect August 2004 caseload standard changes and reasons for case reassignment.
October 2004	Infant Mental Health Conference (Regional Administrator Memorandum 04-108) This memorandum is concerned with the mental health needs of children, and it informs staff that 60 slots are available to attend the November 2004 Infant Mental Health Conference which addressed assessment, treatment and prevention of mental health problems and enhancing social and emotional development.
November 2004	In-Service Training (Chapter 9, Section 670) This section was revised to allow for in-service training for foster/adoptive parents through state office approved internet website(s) and reimbursement of website fees for the in-service training.

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Date	Performance/Achievements/Changes to Policy & Practice
November 2004	<p>Home Study for Non Certified Caretakers (Chapter 6, Section 430) This policy was revised to assure safety of children placed with friends or relatives by requiring statewide criminal record checks and national criminal record checks when the family has lived in another state or otherwise deemed necessary. It also addresses the necessity for criminal record clearances for adults who move into a home after a child is placed there, and provides mechanisms in place for arranging the clearances. It also expands other areas of the home study, including the relationship of the family’s attitude toward the Agency, the family’s financial situation, and safety and risk assessment for the child in the home.</p>
November 2004	<p>Case Transfer (Chapter 6, Section 625) This policy addresses the safety and permanency of children in foster care. It addresses safety by assuring that a worker is always assigned to the case, and that case records are transferred in a timely manner when a child moves and the case must be transferred. The policy addresses both in-state and out-of-state procedures. The policy also addresses permanency by providing detailed case activities required to insure timely transfer of the record of a child who has been freed for adoption to the adoptions unit.</p>
November 2004	<p>Training Requirements for Noncertified Caretakers (Chapter 6, Section 431) This policy change relates to retention of noncertified caretakers by clarifying expenditure reimbursement and setting a clear time frame (within 3 months) for submission of claims for reimbursement. Noncertified caretakers are to have at least 6 hours of training per year.</p>
November 2004	<p>Mandatory Pre-surrender Counseling Requirement (Chapter 6, Section 1410) This policy change relates to permanency for children in terms of surrender of parental rights by parents. It renames “mental health counseling” to “pre-surrender counseling” and requires that both parents be informed of their right to two pre-surrender counseling sessions, which the father, but not the mother, may waive. It provides direction to workers for arranging the counseling sessions and direction to staff who provide the counseling in terms of content and documentation, and provides instructions for payment of counseling when the parent is out of state.</p>
November 2004	<p>Form 445 Voluntary Act of Surrender of Adoption by Mother and Instructions; Form 445A Voluntary Act of Surrender for Adoption by Father, and Instructions (Chapter 25) These forms changes relate to permanency for children in foster care. Surrender forms were revised to require that the counselor provide an opinion as to the parent’s capacity to execute the surrender and recommendations for follow-up evaluations. The parents are required to acknowledge both understanding of the penalties for misrepresenting the child’s biological paternity, and understanding that failure to comply with post-adoption continuing contact will not nullify the surrender or be cause for revocation of the surrender.</p>

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Date	Performance/Achievements/Changes to Policy & Practice
November 2004	<p>Day Care Services Objective (Chapter 12, Section 110) For children in foster care, this policy relates to well-being and placement stability by defining the purpose of the Agency's provision of day care services to reduce the risk of separation of the child from the foster family.</p>
November 2004	<p>Parent or Caretaker Responsibility (Chapter 12, Section 130) This policy relates to the safety and well being of children in foster care who attend day care by clearly outlining the responsibilities of the caretaker regarding the day care center and OCS.</p>
November 2004	<p>Referrals to DHH / All MEDS Certifications to Include Phone Number (Regional Administrator Memorandum 04-115) This memorandum relates to the well being and medical needs of children who leave foster care. When children exit foster care, they are referred to the Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH) for continuation of medical coverage. This memorandum requires that a phone number be provided whenever possible when such a referral is made so that the child's family can be contacted.</p>
November 2004	<p>Fingerprinting of Private Agency Providers (Regional Administrator Memorandum 04-114) This memorandum relates to well being of children in foster care through the agency's cooperation with private providers who are completing home studies for children in foster care by providing electronic fingerprinting. In this memorandum, regional administrators are required to submit the name of the individual in each regional office who will assist the private providers with obtaining fingerprints for potential foster or adoptive families for children in foster care.</p>
November 2004	<p>Louisiana Foster and Adoptive Parent Association Board Development Retreat/Training Seminar and Board Meeting (Regional Administrator Memorandum 04-118) This memorandum relates to well being, permanency and educational needs of children in foster care in that it encourages agency regional foster parent association liaisons to attend the foster and adoptive parent association board meeting/training session. Agency staff involvement in this meeting would serve the purpose of collaboration with foster and adoptive parents and building relationships between foster parents and the agency. An additional training session was scheduled on working with schools on behalf of children in foster care.</p>
November 2004	<p>Building Families – Movement to a Resource Family Approach (Regional Administrator Memorandum 04-113) This memorandum is concerned with permanency for children in foster care and explains the dual purposes of Resource Families who are certified as both foster and adoptive parents and who are full partners with the agency and the birth family in case planning and service delivery, with all activities and decisions based on the child's needs.</p>

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Date	Performance/Achievements/Changes to Policy & Practice
November 2004	Payment Procedures for Expenditures (Chapter 6, Section 1640) This policy change relates to well being of children in foster care by clarifying the directions for the use of the LaCarte card in making necessary purchases for them, and clarifying the worker's responsibility in reviewing requests for reimbursements submitted by foster parents.
November 2004	Practice Pointer – Reunification within 12 Months (Administrative Memoranda 04-26) This practice pointer relates to safety and permanency for children. First, it encourages permanency by providing tips on assuring that children are reunified with their families at the earliest time possible when it is safe for them to do so. Second, it reminds staff that it is the Agency's practice not to return children to their parents or relatives if an assessment does not indicate that they would be safe.
December 2004	Mandates for Training (Chapter 1, Section 310) This policy revision relates to safety and permanency for children in foster care by requiring that all workers (and their supervisors) who are responsible for the well being of children in foster care attend foster/adoptive parent pre-service training. Familiarity with the expectations for foster parents will assist workers in working collaboratively with foster parents, which is expected to enhance placement stability and safety of children in foster homes.
December 2004	Case Planning Process (Chapter 6, Section 800) This policy revision is related to safety, permanency, and well being for children in foster care by requiring an on-going assessment of the risk and safety factors which resulted in the child being placed in foster care as a part of the case planning process in order to assess whether sufficient change has occurred to allow the child to safely return home.
December 2004	On-going Family Team Conferences, Quarterly Staffing and Administrative Reviews (Chapter 6, Section 825) This policy revision relates to safety, well being, and permanency for children in foster care by requiring that the supervisor and worker staff each case at least quarterly, and at each of those staffings, the safety assessment completed at the time the child came into care must be reviewed to determine whether sufficient change has occurred to allow the child to safely return home. These quarterly staffings can replace the pre-family team conference staffing, and permanency planning staffings can replace these quarterly staffings. The policy revision also stresses the importance of scheduling the family team conference/administrative review at a time and location that maximizes the parents' ability to attend.
December 2004	Permanent Plan Goal: Adoption (Chapter 6, Section 854) This policy revision relates to permanency for children in foster care by eliminating the requirement that the Regional Program Specialist approve the decision to seek termination of parental rights.

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Date	Performance/Achievements/Changes to Policy & Practice
December 2004	<p>Practice Pointer – Accessing McKinney-Vento Act Funds (Administrative Memorandum 04-28)</p> <p>This practice pointer relates to permanency and the educational needs of children in foster care by suggesting that workers explore the use of McKinney-Vento Act funds to provide transportation to children in foster care so that they will not have to change schools when they move, and to encourage workers to explore this resource when it is safe to return children to their homes during the school year. The memorandum also provides a list of the contact person in each school system in the state.</p>
December 2004	<p>Practice Pointer – Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning (Administrative Memorandum 04-29)</p> <p>This practice pointer relates to permanency and well being for children in foster care by providing workers with instructions and suggestions for involving all parties (child, parents, caretaker) in the case planning process and for documenting that involvement. Involvement by all parties in the case planning process is expected to result in greater feelings of ownership in the plan and, thus, willingness to achieve the goals and objectives of the plan.</p>
December 2004	<p>Lifelong Family Connections for Adolescents (Administrative Memorandum 04-33)</p> <p>This administrative memorandum is related to permanency for adolescents in foster care, and encourages workers to make diligent efforts to locate persons who will continue to be involved in the lives of adolescents once they become adults. The process of involvement of these persons is based on first expanding the definition of “family” to include all persons who are significant to the adolescent and who demonstrate willingness to be involved in his/her life, and second by engaging those persons to the greatest extent possible in planning with and for the child.</p>
December 2004	<p>Timely Transfer of Records (Administrative Memorandum 04-32)</p> <p>This memorandum is related to permanency for children in foster care and provides instruction and a “case aid” on the timely transfer of case records to the adoptions unit when a child has been freed for adoption. Implementation of this memorandum will decrease the amount of time required to reach finalization of adoptions. Also see November 2004 case transfer policy (Chapter 6, Section 625).</p>
December 2004	<p>Worker Visits with Parents (Policy/Procedure Memorandum 04-19)</p> <p>This memorandum is related to permanency for children in foster care through improving the quality of worker contacts with parents. The memorandum provides guidelines for discussions and assessment, which should be ongoing in worker, visits with parents and discusses means of maintaining quality contact with parents whom it is not possible for the worker to visit.</p>

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Date	Performance/Achievements/Changes to Policy & Practice
December 2004	<p>Child Adolescent Response Team (CART) (Regional Administrator Memorandum 04-122)</p> <p>This memorandum relates to the mental health needs of foster children and inter-agency collaborative efforts that could improve placement stability. The Office of Mental Health's (OMH) CART program is available to children and their caretakers whenever a family-defined crisis occurs and provides short-term strength-based intervention. The memorandum includes a list of OMH contact persons. This intervention is available to foster and adoptive as well as biological families and could result in prevention of placement disruptions and increased stability through supportive services to foster/adoptive families.</p>
December 2004	<p>Education Survey (Regional Administrator Memorandum 04-125)</p> <p>This memorandum relates to the educational needs of children in foster care, and transmits a survey to be completed by supervisory units to identify educational problems and issues for children in foster care so that these issues can be addressed with state and local education officials.</p>
December 2004	<p>Regional Placement Specialist Meeting and Collaborative Meeting with Residential Providers (Regional Administrator Memorandum 04-126)</p> <p>This memorandum relates to the well being and stability of children placed in residential settings, and informs Regional Placement Specialists of a meeting with residential providers intended to improve communication between the Agency and providers.</p>
December 2004	<p>CQI Issues: 1.) Transportation of Non-Custody Children; 2.) Shelter Duty (Regional Administrator Memorandum 04-127)</p> <p>The first issue discussed in this memorandum relates to the well being of children in foster care and their continuing contact with siblings who are not in foster care. The memorandum indicates that workers will be protected from liability claims when they transport children who are not in the custody of the state as long as they are doing so while performing the duties of their employment. This legal clearance will facilitate visitation between children who are in the custody of the State and their siblings who are not. The second issue addresses the responsibility of DSS staff in providing services at shelters as part of a coordinated responses to disasters, e.g. hurricanes.</p>
December 2004	<p>Prevention Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP) (Regional Administrator Memorandum 04-131)</p> <p>This memorandum relates to the well being of children by announcing the availability of in-service training for foster and adoptive parents on improving relationships through improved communication skills. The results of this training are to reduce stress and increase mutual support among couples, and, thus, reduce risk of child maltreatment.</p>

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Date	Performance/Achievements/Changes to Policy & Practice
December 2004	<p>OCS Form 98 A Child Placement Agreement and Instructions (Chapter 25, Form 98A)</p> <p>This form revision relates to safety for children in foster care as it incorporates an assessment of risk in foster care placements.</p>
December 2004	<p>OCS Form 402 Foster Child Handbook and Instructions (Chapter 25, Form 402; Policy/Procedure Memorandum 04-18)</p> <p>This new form consists of a handbook developed collaboratively by agency staff, independent living providers, and foster youth. It was introduced to staff through a policy/procedure memorandum describing its content and purpose. The handbook relates to safety, permanency and well being for youth in foster care by providing them with information about what to expect from their foster care experience, explaining to them the importance of communication with their worker and their involvement in the case planning process, and the development of skills necessary for independent living and the benefits of the Young Adult Program.</p>
December 2004	<p>OCS Form 604 IV Foster Home Safety / Risk Interview of Foster Child and Instructions (Chapter 25, Form 604 IV)</p> <p>This form is related to safety of children in foster care and provides a framework for interviewing children in foster care to reduce the risk of repeat maltreatment.</p>
December 2004	<p>OCS Form 446A Notice to Attorneys Who are Not Notaries Public Executing Surrenders for Adoption and Instructions (Chapter 25, Form 446A)</p> <p>This form revision relates to permanency for children in foster care, and serves as a notice of Children's Code requirements for attorneys who are executing surrenders for adoption. This form is used in conjunction with Form 445, revised in November 2004.</p>
December 2004	<p>Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Social Services Office of Community Services and Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Louisiana, effective December 31, 2004, has been signed by the Assistant Secretary of OCS and the Chief Executive Officer of CASA of Louisiana. The goal of this memorandum is to increase identification and location of parents and potential relative placement resources and permanent contacts for children in foster care in a timely manner.</p>
January 2005	<p>Recertification of Foster and Adoptive Homes (Chapter 9, Section 615)</p> <p>This section was revised to include extending timeframes for processing foster/adoptive home recertification and required worker/supervisor staffing prior to the due date for recertification. The request for recertification was also updated.</p>

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Date	Performance/Achievements/Changes to Policy & Practice
January 2005	<p>Certification of Diagnostic and Assessment Homes (Chapter 9, Section 560)</p> <p>This section was revised to emphasize the number of beds to be served by Diagnostic and Assessment (D&A) homes; provide clarification that children in D&A homes are not eligible to receive special board payments, and D&A homes are not to care for regular foster children except with state office approval, and to clarify the procedure for placements lasting over 30 days.</p>
January 2005	<p>Locating Absent Parents (Chapter 6, Section 411)</p> <p>This policy relates to permanency for children in foster care by clearly outlining expectations of workers regarding their diligent search for absent parents and provides clear and specific guidelines for methods of conducting searches for absent parents and other relatives.</p>
January 2005	<p>Diagnostic and Assessment Homes (Chapter 6, Section 520)</p> <p>This policy relates to well being and permanency for children in foster care and informs workers that Diagnostic and Assessment homes are to be used only for very short-term placements while an assessment is made as to the most appropriate and least restrictive placement for the child, and that Diagnostic and Assessment Homes receive a stipend in addition to the child's board payment and are not eligible to receive special board payments.</p>
January 2005	<p>Practice Pointer - Discussion and Documentation of Foster Parent Stated Adoptive Intent (Administrative Memorandum 05-002)</p> <p>This practice pointer relates to permanency for children in foster care by explicitly addressing the issue of foster parents who do not move forward with adopting a child whom they have stated they intended to adopt or who attempt to sabotage adoptive placements for children in their care. Workers are instructed to have frequent and candid conversations with foster parents from early in the placement about the Agency's requirement that children have permanent homes as quickly as possible, and that these conversations be documented.</p>
January 2005	<p>Maximum Payment for MDT Medical Consultation (Policy/Procedure Memorandum 05-001)</p> <p>This memorandum relates to safety, well being and permanency for children in foster care as it establishes a maximum payment of \$175 for medical consultations in MDT staffings which may be held for the purpose of assessing the safety and well being of a child upon return home.</p>

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Date	Performance/Achievements/Changes to Policy & Practice
January 2005	<p>Retention Survey Findings (Regional Administrator Memorandum 05-004)</p> <p>This memorandum relates specifically to home development units, but has a direct bearing on the well being of children in foster care by relaying information concerning the reasons that foster parents withdraw from the program. Understanding the reasons foster parents withdraw and ameliorating those conditions whenever possible could result in an increased pool of foster/adoptive parents and, thus, better matches between children and caretakers.</p>
January 2005	<p>Louisiana CASA Conference (Regional Administrator Memorandum 05-012)</p> <p>This memorandum relates to safety, well being, and permanence for children in foster care through providing the opportunity for two staff members from each region and 5 staff members from state office to attend the CASA conference. One of the significant events of the conference was a workgroup session for OCS staff and CASA representatives from each region to begin implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding between OCS and CASA that will result in CASA's assistance in locating relative for permanent connections for children.</p>
January 2005	<p>Child Residential Services: Facts and Figures Brochure (Regional Administrator Memorandum 05-013)</p> <p>This memorandum forwards to regional offices a copy of a brochure regarding the special issues of residential placement for foster children. The brochure was sent to all courts exercising juvenile jurisdiction. The brochure relates to the well being of children in foster care by creating greater awareness among the judiciary of the special needs of children in foster care.</p>
January 2005	<p>Mentoring Children of Prisoners (Regional Administrator Memorandum 05-015)</p> <p>This memorandum relates to the well being of children in foster care whose parents are incarcerated by providing staff with information about a mentoring program for such children. This mentoring program could be beneficial to children in foster care whose parents are incarcerated.</p>
February 2005	<p>Expansion of Family Group Decision Making (Regional Administrator Memorandum 05-019)</p> <p>This memorandum relates to safety, permanency and well being of children in foster care as it expands the Family Group Decision Making process into two additional regions (Shreveport and Lafayette), and this process engages extended family and other persons closely connected to the family in assuring safety, permanency, and well being of foster children in placement, independent living and/or upon return home.</p>

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Date	Performance/Achievements/Changes to Policy & Practice
February 2005	<p>Faith-Based Initiative (Regional Administrator Memorandum 05-002) This memorandum relates to continuation of efforts to recruit through collaboration with faith-based organizations. It addresses some strategies for initiating a relationship with members of the faith-based community. They include: follow-up be made with churches or church leaders that attended the initial meeting to encourage their continued support; approach churches or pastors with the idea that they could invite Reverend Martin to serve as speaker to their congregation; and encourage pastors to invite as many pastors, churches or members they felt their facility could accommodate. Staff was advised that federal technical assistance funds would be used for Rev. Martin’s travel, hotel accommodation, meals, and honorarium.</p>
March 2005	<p>Family Social Assessment (Chapter 6, Section 205) This policy change relates to safety for children in foster care in that it requires criminal record clearances on the child’s parent, caretaker, or potential caretaker. It also summarizes the risk to the child and addresses safety issues that need to be resolved to provide the child with permanence.</p>
March 2005	<p>Early Intervention and Mental Retardation/Developmental Disability (MR/DD) Waiver (Chapter 6, Section 703) This policy relates to the well being of children in foster care in that it addresses independent living skill services for children with developmental delays or developmental disabilities. The policy directs as soon as the child enters care and ongoing that planning for transition from foster care to the child’s permanency plan take place. This policy revision also incorporates information contained in a previous Policy/Procedure memorandum related to referral to Early Steps Program for intervention for children under age 3, and it provides information regarding referral to the Office of Citizens with Developmental Disabilities for home and community-based Medicaid waiver services.</p>
March 2005	<p>Day Care for Foster Children (Chapter 6, Section 965; Chapter 12, Section 1230) This policy has been relocated in the OCS manual in order to consolidate all Day Care information. It has been revised to allow children in foster care to receive services in a Class B Day Care Center if the foster parent is willing to assume full responsibility for payment or the day care center is willing to offer the services as a scholarship/fee waiver, and if the day care center will agree not to use corporal punishment.</p>
March 2005	<p>Serious Injury, Trauma, or Death of a Foster Child (Chapter 6, Section 1235) This policy revision relates to safety of children in foster care and includes notification to the Bureau of Licensing of the death of a foster child, whom to inform regarding any media involvement, and a conference between the worker/supervisor and District Manager regarding notification of a biological family when parental rights have been terminated. Additionally, the procedure for law suits for injury of the child has been revised.</p>

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Date	Performance/Achievements/Changes to Policy & Practice
March 2005	<p>Communication of Certified Home Availability (Chapter 9, Section 610) This new policy relates to the safety, well being and permanency of children in foster care by requiring home development units to provide information on all available foster homes (that are not child specific) to all placing workers. The communication of this information is intended to ensure that appropriate matching of the skills and strengths of the foster parents with the special needs of individual children to assure safe and stable placements for children, either temporarily or permanently.</p>
March 2005	<p>OCS Form 420 Agreement between OCS and a Class B Day Care Center and Instructions (Chapter 5, Form 420) This form is to be used to as an agreement that OCS will not be responsible for payment for children placed in Class B Day Care Centers, and that the Day Care Center will not use corporal punishment.</p>
March 2005	<p>Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Plan and Procedures Handbook This document was added to the on-line policy management system, thus becoming available to all foster care workers and supervisors. This addition is expected to create greater involvement by all staff in the CQI process and thus improve the quality of services provided to children in foster care and their families.</p>
March 2005	<p>Recruitment Ad Campaign (RAM 05-023) This memo addressed the use of Governor Blanco’s recruitment ads in conjunction with regional home development staff appearances on local television stations.</p>
April 2005	<p>Efforts to collaborate with federally recognized Indian Tribes and to ensure compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act On April 18, 2005 the Agency held a meeting with members of the four federally recognized American Indian Tribes and a representative of the Governor’s Office on Indian Affairs. The meeting focused on collaboration and education. A follow-up meeting is planned in November 2005.</p>
April 2005	<p>First Family Team Conference & On-Going Family Team Conferences, Quarterly Staffings and Administrative Reviews (Section 6-820 & 6-825) This policy has been revised to address issues surfacing about notification of absent parents.</p>
April 2005	<p>Description of Capacity, Certification, Specialized Homes, AFC approval, Stipend & Special Board Rate (Sections 6-515, 6-525 & 6-925 & 9-210, 9-555 & 9-588) This policy has been revised to describe types of specialized homes; convey monthly stipend discontinuance, if after 60 days, the treatment home has one or no placements; require State Office approval of regular foster/adoptive placements in treatment homes; include special board request procedure and replace “subsidy” with “stipend” and “special board rate” with “special board compensation.”</p>

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Date	Performance/Achievements/Changes to Policy & Practice
April 2005	<p>Resource Family Project (9-100, 9-120, 9-425, 9-435, 9-500, 9-535, 9-587 & 9-570)</p> <p>This home development policy has been revised to begin implementation of the “Resource Family” project in order to improve and expand opportunities for foster children achieving permanency in a more timely manner. The project dually certifies homes as foster and/or adopt based on family preferences.</p>
April 2005	<p>State Recognition of Foster Parents and Workers of the Year 2005 (RAM 05-033)</p>
April 2005	<p>KIDMED Reports EP-0-40 & EP-0-41 (RAM 05-034)</p>
April 2005	<p>Governor Proclaims May 2005 as Foster Care Month in Louisiana (RAM 05-037)</p>
April 2005	<p>Forms/Procedural Revision</p> <p>The following forms and procedures were revised to help in improving permanency outcomes for children: HDU 15 Foster/Adoptive Parent Application; OCS Form 60 – Family Social Assessment to include screening and other information on substance abuse, mental illness and domestic violence, additional educational information and summary information to assist with the development of case specific service plans; OCS Forms 604 I, 604II & 604 III Foster Home Re-Certification/ Worker Assessment; OCS Form 427 revised to personalize the foster parent’s general requirements and responsibilities, convey discontinuance of stipend if no or one placement in the specialized home; address child care, special board, mileage reimbursement and dissolving the Agreement Contract; replaces subsidy with stipend.</p>
Ongoing	<p>Monthly Quality Assurance Case Reviews & Quarterly Continuous Quality Improvement Peer Case Reviews</p> <p>Both of these review processes measure the Agency’s compliance with national, federal and state standards of best practice.</p>
June 2005	<p>During the 2005 legislative session the Agency requested additional funds to increase the foster care board rate; however, it was not funded due to budgetary constraints.</p>
June 2005	<p>Alternative Permanent Living Arrangement (Policy 6-860)</p> <p>During 2004 and 2005 FFY, OCS reviewed policy relating to alternative permanent living arrangements for the purpose of more closely tracking requirements of the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA). Policy included the terminology change to the use of the phrase “alternative permanent living arrangement” along with other changes including a definition of the concept and delineation of permanent connections for children in residential placements. The terminology in case plans was also reviewed and scheduled for change. The actual policy and case plan changes occurred in July of 2005.</p>

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Statewide Recruitment/Retention Plan

Targeted recruitment remains a necessary component of our child welfare system in view of the fact that over 60% of the children in our care are of African-American descent.

During SFY year 2004-2005, each of the 10 regional offices participated in diligent recruitment of potential foster/adoptive families that reflected the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the State. In addition to an array of statewide recruitment initiatives, a faith-based recruitment initiative served as the main targeted recruitment vehicle focusing on recruiting minority families.

Reverend W. C. Martin, a noted faith-based adoption advocate, was invited to lead the charge in a statewide effort to educate, motivate and encourage a partnership between agency staff and faith-based organizations. As a result of this effort, churches, pastors and other interested stakeholders formed relationships to encourage families to adopt or become foster parents. A faith-based initiative was conducted in the Monroe Region on May 3 and 4, 2005 with Reverend W. C. Martin as the key presenter. The Louisiana State Baptist Convention was being held during Reverend Martin's visit to Monroe; therefore, he was able to present OCS' need for families to pastors and ministers representing congregations throughout the State. OCS staff were also present to provide information and answer questions that were raised regarding the foster care/adoption process. This event allowed Monroe Regional staff the opportunity to get acquainted with pastors and ministers and to initiate partnerships with faith-based organizations. Refreshments for this function were underwritten by the host church and its congregation.

Additional faith-based activities are scheduled in the following regions during the month of June 2005: *Baton Rouge – June 18, 2005; Alexandria – June 16, 2005; Jefferson – June 19, 2005; and Orleans – June 24, 2005 (*tentative dates). The planned events will also feature Reverend W. C. Martin as the key presenter. Churches will host the event and OCS will underwrite expenses for refreshments.

Barriers/ Challenges Impacting Foster Care and Home Development Goal Attainment:

OCS currently has 4231 children in foster care. This number is lower than the averages for the 2003 and 2004 state fiscal years (SFY). In SFY 2003, the Agency had an average of 4369 children in care and in SFY 2004, OCS had an average of 4316 children in care.

Some of the issues facing the foster care program over the last year include:

1. Transition from Clinical Evaluation Project to Clinical Assessment/Evaluation and Treatment

During the 2004-2005 SFY, the Agency transitioned from the Louisiana State University (LSU) monitored Clinical Evaluation Project (CEP) to the OCS Clinical Assessment/Evaluation and Treatment process. The OCS administered program for managing mental health services was initiated after the 2004 Louisiana Legislature did not allow this budget allocation. The CEP contract with LSU ended on 12/31/04; however, the Agency began implementing the new process in 10/04. The transition marks changes in OCS staff responsibility for the referral,

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approval and monitoring of clinical services. The process also establishes new guidelines for assessments, evaluations and treatment for clients.

2. Respite Services for Children in Foster Care

The Agency developed a respite task force to make recommendations to address some of the issues regarding respite.

The issues include:

1. A decrease in the number of foster home certifications.
2. The foster parent association has received complaints from different foster parents about respite services being provided through the resource centers.
3. Foster parents must go through workers to obtain respite services provided through the resource centers. This causes delays, is frustrating to foster parents and they do not like going through the workers to obtain the service.
4. The resource centers provide recreational respite, but not all of them provide overnight respite services. Many resource centers don't have a license for overnight respite.
5. Some regions are not willing to share homes for provision of respite services.
6. There have been problems in the resource center database that tracks respite (as well as other resource center service).
7. The Bureau of Licensing does not have a license for this category of respite. Several centers have pursued this option and licensing indicated to them that they needed to become certified as a foster home.

The respite task force is making the following recommendations to the executive management team:

1. More collaboration with resource centers on respite.
2. Redefining respite and identifying the goal and purpose of such.
3. Development of an internal database for data on the resource centers by September 2005.
4. The foster parent handbook to include a description of respite.
5. More involvement from foster parents in the development and delivery of respite.
6. In home respite in the home of a foster parent requesting respite

3. Budgetary Constraints

During this past fiscal year the Agency experienced budget cuts that affected service delivery. In particular, the funding used for recreational activities for children in care was cut from the budget. While OCS was able to secure some TANF funding to provide developmental and socialization activities for children, it focused primarily on pregnancy prevention. As a result, fewer children were "eligible" for a broad range of recreational activities.

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4. Home Development issues include:
 1. Statewide reductions in Home Development staff have made it difficult for regions to identify staff to manage private agency fingerprinting.
 2. Although funds are available and the Agency is willing to provide one to one supervision in facilities and foster homes to prevent replacement, facilities do not always have staff available to provide the service. In addition, it is difficult to identify qualified providers to provide the service in regular foster homes.
 3. The amount of staff time and overtime required to attend foster/adoptive parent training presents a challenge to the requirement that all foster care and adoption staff attend foster/adoptive parent training.

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

DSS/OCS data shows the following children who were in the care (custody) of OCS 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 below.

Regional Analysis of Children Transferred from OCS to DOC:

Region of Child's Domicile	SFY 2004-2005 # Children Custody Transferred	SFY 2005-2006 # Children Custody Transferred	SFY 2006-2007 # Children Custody Transferred	SFY 2007-2008 # Children Custody Transferred	SFY 2008-2009 # Children Custody Transferred
Orleans	1				
Baton Rouge	2				
Thibodaux	1				
Lafayette	4				
Lake Charles	0				
Alexandria	2				
Shreveport	1				
Monroe	1				
Jefferson	2				
TOTAL	15				

The statistics reflect OCS database information on children who changed custody by region and by year. The data is on children whose case was opened in the State's foster care system and who had their custody transferred to the Department of Corrections. 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 chart above was obtained through a Web-focus Report.

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ADOPTION

Goal: Permanency

Ongoing Services to Achieve Goals: Outreach, recruitment, retention, collaboration, use of contract services, training and Quality Assurance (QA) efforts

Performance/Achievement:

The Agency has taken a number of action steps to meet the goal of permanency in the adoption program. Since the development of the 2005-2009 Child and Family Services Plan, OCS has created new policies and procedures to enhance how services are provided and to ultimately increase the number of adoptions. Newly implemented policy and practice changes are listed in the chart below:

Date	Performance/Achievements/Changes to Policy & Practice
August 2004	<p>Changes in procedures for fingerprinting foster/adoptive parents (Chapter 9, Section 210) A criminal record clearance on foster and adoption home applicants and all other members of the household 18 years of age or older shall be conducted prior to certifying a family to foster or adopt in accordance with R.S. 46:51.2 C. The Printrak Livescan is available in each regional office for use in obtaining these clearances.</p>
August 2004	<p>Adoption Caseload Standards (PPM 04-14) The Adoption caseload standard changed to 15 children available for adoption per worker. The adoption caseload of 15 children includes 15 children available for adoption and for whom the permanency goal is adoption. If the child is available for adoption, but the permanency goal is no longer adoption, the child is counted as a foster care child.</p>
October 2004	<p>Case Assignment Procedures (Chapter 8, Section 112) The Adoption Specialist's caseload size is the total number of foster children assigned to him in TIPS. The present caseload standard established by OCS is a total of 15 cases. A foster child's case is assigned to an Adoption Specialist at the time the child has been made legally available for adoption and his or her case is transferred to the Adoption Unit. Cases, in which an Adoption Specialist has been assigned to a foster child for purposes of adoptive home recruitment prior to the child's being made legally available, are not included in the caseload count. Included only are children whose cases have been transferred to the Adoption Unit following legal proceedings making the child legally available for adoption.</p>

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Date	Performance/Achievements/Changes to Policy & Practice
October 2004	<p>Changes to Foster Care/Adoption review instrument (PPM 04-17; Chapter 14 Section 600 & 610)</p> <p>Question added: During the last six months, for all cases with the 427-B (Adoptive Placement Agreement) signed, does the case record contain documentation that every three months the required Supervisor-Worker case review staffing was held?</p>
November 2004	<p>Forms changed to include 2003 legislative changes to the Children's Code (Form (s) 445, 445-A & 446-A Chapter 6, Section 1410)</p> <p>The affidavit of pre-surrender counseling is expanded in order to provide counselor's opinion about parent's mental capacity to surrender and recommendation for any further evaluations.</p>
November 2004	<p>ICPC agreement with Michigan (Chapter 8, Section 740)</p>
November 2004	<p>Timely transfer of records from foster care to adoption program (AM 04-32)</p> <p>A practice reminder to staff concerning timelines and procedures for transfer of case responsibility from foster care to adoption: If the child becomes available for adoption and the case is to be transferred to the regional adoption unit, the foster care staff, within the next business day, notifies the adoption unit by telephone, e-mail, or fax of the child's availability for adoption. The child's case record, expense record, the case record copy of the lifebook and the Service to Parent (SP) case record must be transferred within thirty days from the date of surrender or date the TPR decision is rendered in court for adoption.</p>
November 2004	<p>Internet Training available for staff & procedures for authorizing payment of internet training for foster/adoptive parents (Chapter 9, Section 670 & Chapter 20, Section 400)</p> <p>In-service training topics available on state office approved internet website(s) can be utilized for required in-service training. Of the required 15 annual in-service training hours, 12 of the 15 hours can be obtained on-line. Upon completion of training, a copy of the training certificate is submitted to the Home Development unit. Only the utilization of the state office approved website(s) is to be accepted for in-service training hours and reimbursement of fees.</p>
December 2004	<p>Adoption and Foster Care Staff To Attend Foster Parent Pre-Service Training. (Chapter 1, Section 310)</p> <p>All foster care workers and supervisors, and all Adoption workers and supervisors shall attend the complete Foster/Adoptive Parent Pre-Service Training by the end of the second year of employment with the Agency or transfer into any of these programs.</p>

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Date	Performance/Achievements/Changes to Policy & Practice
December 2004	<p>Worker Visits with Parents (Adoption) (Chapter 8, Section 8-505; PPM 04-19)</p> <p>This memorandum clarified and revised policy on worker visits and was issued with the goal of improving agency practice to provide our clients with the best possible services and to achieve greater compliance with federal standards for child welfare services. Worker contacts with the pre-adoptive parents are the focus for the adoption program. Pre-adoptive parents are those foster/adoptive parents who have signed an adoptive placement agreement. Focus for worker contacts include the following: review of the case plan, discussion of the care needs of the child, input from the pre-adoptive parents on case plan goals and actions, assistance in adjustment and relationship development between the child and the adoptive parents, complete on-going evaluation of the home environment and assessment of possible risk factors for the child.</p>
January 2005	<p>Extension of Timeframes for recertification of Foster/Adoptive Parents (Chapter 9, Section 615) Policy change allows for one thirty day extension to be granted to allow foster/adoptive parents to come into compliance with agency requirements or when it is in the best interests of the child(ren).</p>
January 2005	<p>Discussion & Documentation of Foster Parent Stated Adoptive Intent (AM 05-002) This practice pointer addresses the actions required by the worker regarding the discussion and documentation of the foster parents intent to adopt.</p>
January 2005	<p>AdoptUsKids Video (RAM 05-006)</p> <p>Regional Home Development Units statewide were sent BETA copies (two per region) of the AdoptUSKids recruitment videos. There were no state funds available to pay for the costs of airing the ads, but regions were encouraged to use Regional Recruitment funds or contact local television stations to inquire if they would run the ads free of charge as a public service.</p>
Monthly/Quarterly	<p>Continuous Quality Improvement case reviews – In SFY 2004-2005 the Agency conducted a review of the adoption program through both the PCR process and the traditional QA process.</p>
Ongoing	<p>Maintenance of LARE and links with AdoptUSKids</p> <p>Ongoing review was conducted on all foster children who are available for adoption with a goal of Adoption and in need of adoptive placement to ensure that these children are photo-listed on a timely basis on both Louisiana and national photo-listing websites to assist in child and sibling specific recruitment efforts.</p>

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Date	Performance/Achievements/Changes to Policy & Practice
Ongoing	<p>Adoption Exchange Meetings Ongoing adoption exchange meetings are held with agency staff, community stakeholders and Tribal representatives. The exchanges are aimed at strengthening our working relationships, and sharing information regarding placement needs, recruitment ideas and resources pertaining to general, targeted and child specific recruitment.</p>

Barriers/ Challenges Impacting Goal Attainment:

The Agency has worked to address issues and barriers impacting adoption. There have been positive steps in addressing these barriers as evidenced by the number of finalized adoptions (see chart below). Of the 4354 children in care, 508 are available for adoption. Of the 508 children available for adoption 236 are registered on LARE, www.adoptuskids.org/states/la and the new Children’s Bureau Internet site. Of those children listed on LARE, 150 are males; 86 are females; 60 are white; 172 are African American; 4 are multiracial; 55 are members of a sibling group; and 200 are deemed physically, emotional or intellectually challenged.

The Agency continues to work on issues affecting and related to timely adoption of foster children. Examples of this effort include but are not limited to the following: identification and remediation of delays in the termination of parental rights process; early and ongoing assessment of children’s special needs; simplifying the adoption subsidy approval process; identifying issues related to judicial delays and, with the assistance of the Louisiana Court Improvement Project personnel, addressing those problems with the specific courts of juvenile jurisdiction; working on improving the timeliness of case record transfer from foster care staff to adoption staff; increased focus on and documentation of search, assessment and reassessment of suitable relative resources throughout the life of a case; adopting a resource family child placement approach; and providing dual certification of foster/adoptive parent.

In 2005 OCS requested, but was denied, legislative approval to increase funding of adoption maintenance subsidy from it’s present maximum of up to 80% of foster care board rate to up to 100% of the foster care board rate.

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Finalized Adoptions

The chart below depicts the number of adoptions finalized during the first half of FFY 2004-2005. (October 1, 2004 through March 31, 2005)

Region	Adoptions FFY 2005	Adoptions FFY 2006	Adoptions FFY 2007	Adoptions FFY 2008	2005-2009 Final Report Totals
Orleans	22				
Baton Rouge	11				
Thibodaux	4				
Lafayette	54				
Lake Charles	21				
Alexandria	18				
Shreveport	12				
Monroe	14				
Covington	49				
Jefferson	21				
Statewide Total	226				

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Adoption Finalization Data

The chart below represents statewide adoption data for the first half of FFY 2005 (October 1, 2004 through March 31, 2005). The data provided does not represent four complete quarters.

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

Categories	FFY 2005	FFY 2006	FFY 2007	FFY 2008	2005- 2009 Final Report Totals
# Children Finalized	226				
Average Time to Free (TPR)	1.77 yrs.				
Average Time to Sign 427	.96 yrs.				
Average Time to Finalization	.29 yrs.				
Average Time of Length of Time in Care	3.01 yrs				
Average Age of Children Finalized	6.64 yrs. of age				

Average Time to Sign 427-B: Time period from the date the child is legally free to the date the child enters a formal adoptive placement.

Average Time to Finalization: Time period from signing of 427B to 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 the Agency has filed.

Region	2005 SFY 7/04-3/05	2006 SFY 7/05-3/06	2003 SFY 7/06-3/07	2004 SFY 4/07-3/08	2005-2009 Final Report Totals
Orleans	26				
Baton Rouge	24				
Thibodaux	8				
Lafayette	43				
Lake Charles	29				
Alexandria	35				
Shreveport	20				
Monroe	9				
Covington	66				
Jefferson	6				
Statewide	266				

Adoption Incentive Awards

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

- Development and dissemination of adoptive home recruitment material
- Statewide media recruitment initiatives.
- Regional recruiter contracts.
- Adoption training opportunities and continued education.
- Post adoption services to children, adoptive families and birth parents.

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- Additional or temporary staff, overtime compensation, and/or equipment or materials.
- Contracted home studies to expedite adoptive placements.
- Annual adoption celebration and on-going adoption exchanges.
- Staff attendance at the North American Council on Adoptable Children Conference.

The amount of Adoption Incentive Award granted to Louisiana is as follows:

FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR	AMOUNT
2005	No Award Given
2006	
2007	
2008	
2009	

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Inter-Country Adoption

The Office of Community Services continues to provide post-adoptive services to adoptive families who adopt a child from another country. Services are provided through our statewide network of ten regionally based Foster/Adoptive Family Resource Centers. The access points for services for families who have adopted internationally are the same for those families who adopt a child from within the State. Available services include teen groups, respite, parenting courses, child and family centered social activities, workshops and educational advocacy and crisis counseling.

Child 1

We last reported that this child identified as child 1 was adopted from Romania and originally entered the custody of the Department of Corrections, Office of Youth Development due to a charge of simple battery. Further that the child was then discharged from two residential programs due to negative behavior and subsequently was placed in foster care on June 23, 2001. Child 1 is currently placed with a family in New Orleans region. Neither he nor his adoptive parents were willing to work towards reunification. Moreover, it was deemed to be clinically beneficial to the adolescent who suffered emotionally in the care of his adoptive parents to sever their parental rights via a voluntary surrender. The goal for child 1 was changed from reunification to that of Alternative Living Plan in keeping with his wishes and the court of jurisdictions determination of this child's best interest. In addition, child 1 will turn 16 shortly and shall be enrolled in our Independent Living Program.

Child 2

We also included information on another child adopted from Romania in our last report. This child entered care on November 12, 1999 in Covington Region. As previously reported, this child's adoptive parents surrendered their rights on that same day. This second child was placed with an adoptive family; however, after a turbulent placement, the family asked for his removal citing the severity of his problems and concerns for their own personal safety as reasons for the removal request. Child 2 has been diagnosed with Reactive Attachment Disorder, ADHD-combined type, Depression-NOS, Disruptive Behavior Disorder-NOS, Physical Abuse of Child, Psychosis-NOS, R/O Speech Disorder, R/O Learning Disorder and Obsessive Compulsive Personality Traits. He currently resides at Hope Youth Ranch which is a residential facility geared toward the treatment of children with emotional and behavioral problems. His goal has been changed from Adoption to that of Alternate Planned Living Arrangement.

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11. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program Report for Fiscal Year 2005 and Application for Federal Fiscal Year 2006

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 (YAP) 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 1,171 youth were served by the eleven contract providers located throughout Louisiana during the federal fiscal year 2003 – 2004. this total is an unduplicated total of youth served.

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 18th 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 YAP; and,
- Youth who attended 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 on assessment, case planning, and implementation of independent living plans for foster care staff;
- 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 needed and provided to each youth.

Some CFCIP providers programs specifically focused on the vocational aspects of independent living. Vocational assessment, job preparation, job placement and continuing vocational support

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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 the 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.

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.

The providers of CFCIP services maintained integration and coordination of services to 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.

The greatest opportunity for youth input into the program is the Youth Advisory Boards. 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. Youth Advisory Boards continued working on numerous projects. A handbook for youth coming into care was written by the youth on the Youth Advisory Board and was published in 2005. Youth have been involved in the OCS' certification process and Program Improvement Plan. Development of the Youth Handbook was a PIP item and the handbook is now distributed to all youth 12 and older coming into foster care. Two former foster care youth

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are members of a Legislative Committee reviewing the foster care system in Louisiana in order to recommend changes to the Louisiana State Legislature.

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 children 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 to 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, OCS provided services such as, room and board, educational or vocational services, clothing and other support services to former foster care youth ages 18 years up to 21 years old in YAP. CFCIP funds are used to supplement YAP funding for room and board to provide the needed funds for room and board for youth 18 years and older.

When a foster child aged out of foster care at age 18, he or she could voluntarily participate in YAP 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. The YAP contract was signed by the participant upon the participant's 18th birthday, or within six months of becoming 18 years old. For youth who participated in YAP and left YAP 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.

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 may be used to supplement state funds used for room and board for youth in YAP if the YAP's budget of state general funds was depleted. In this fiscal year, \$155,560 CFCIP funds or 11% of the total CFCIP funds were used to pay for supervised apartment living for youth over the age of 18 years old.

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In YAP, 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.

OCS provided Medicaid services for youth ages 18 up to the age of 21 in YAP 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.

Startup costs were provided for youth moving to their own apartments, supervised apartments and college dormitories. Youth moving into apartments also received funding for apartment deposits, water deposits, and telephone deposits. LIHEAP funds paid the cost for the electric or gas deposits. YAP funds also provided monthly living expenses for youth living in apartments or dormitories with state funds. State funds or CFCIP funds were used for the daily rate for youth living in supervised apartment programs and included their living expenses.

OCS 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.

Other examples of community resources that have coordinated with the CFCIP programs are the mental health centers, hospitals, 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. Collaboration with these agencies will continue in the next fiscal year.

OCS 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 Department of Labor services, such as job readiness activities, employment, job placement, tutoring, mentoring and support services. By Interagency Agreement, a joint 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.

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The Child Welfare Specialist for the CFCIP participated in the Department of Labor's Shared Vision for Youth, Regional Forum in Phoenix, Arizona, on December 13 and 14, 2005. In addition to the Agency, the Louisiana Department of Labor and other officials with the Department of Labor, the Louisiana Workforce Commission, Job Corps and local workforce representatives formed the work group. As a result of this regional forum, a work group was formed called the Interagency Out of School Youth Work Group that focuses attention and resources on Louisiana's out of school youth including foster children and former foster children. This work force will continue in the next fiscal year to address these issues.

The Child Welfare Specialist for the CFCIP participated and presented at the Louisiana Discharge Planning Summit - Preventing Homelessness: Discharge Planning from Publicly Funded Institutions which was held in Baton Rouge on March 18, 2005. The Louisiana Interagency Action Council on Homelessness, Louisiana Policy Academy on Chronic Homelessness and the Louisiana Advocacy Coalition for the Homeless co-sponsored the summit. The purpose of the summit was to build on current initiatives and develop recommendations that will help to prevent homelessness in Louisiana. Collaboration with these agencies will continue in the next fiscal year.

The Louisiana Public Broadcasting and Capital Area Court Appointed Special Advocates Association partnered with OCS to present a special preview of the foster care documentary film "Aging Out" by Roger Weisberg and Vanessa Roth and a discussion after the film. The Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative funded the project. Louisiana legislators, representatives of the OCS and other community representatives attended the preview on March 7, 2005. CFCIP providers and representatives of the OCS attended the second preview of the film on May 12, 2005.

OCS 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. Collaboration with these agencies will continue in the next fiscal year.

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.

FCFCIP 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. Collaboration with these agencies will continue in the next fiscal year.

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The Louisiana Coalition of Independent Living Skills Providers continues to be composed of OCS' 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

OCS has continued to offer CFCIP services during the 2003 – 2004 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, 2003 through September 30, 2004), there were 2,566 foster care children and young adult clients who were age eligible for CFCIP services.

There were 16 fifteen year old youth, 1,124 sixteen year old clients, 597 seventeen year old youth, 568 eighteen year old clients, 150 nineteen year old youth, and 111 twenty year old clients. There were 1,307 females and 1,259 males eligible for services. The majority of the eligible population was black numbering 1,586. The white eligible clients totaled 942. There were six Asian clients, fourteen American Indians, three Hispanic and one client served was in the racially mixed-not black or white category. The race/ethnicity of 14 youth was not known.

Of the majority of eligible youth, 742 resided in foster homes and 336 resided in group homes. The eligible youth living independently was 333. The number of eligible clients residing in institutional settings, such as residential facilities, psychiatric hospitals, medical facilities was 656. Finally, the number of clients residing in the category of other type of placements was 358. Data was not available on 141 clients. The data revealed that 2,022 youth had no disabilities. There were 279 youth with disabilities of mental illness, 205 youth with developmental disabilities, and 60 youth with other types of disabilities. The eligible clients who were single numbered 2,561. Four eligible youth reported that they were married and one reported as divorced. There were 306 youth in care for less than six months. There were 398 clients in foster care for between six months but less than one year. The largest group numbered 688 was youth in care between one but less than two years. Another group of 351 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 214. The remaining youth were in care for the following time periods: 98 for four years but less than five years, 135 for five years but less than six years, and 375 for 6 years or longer. Data was not known on one youth.

In the 2003 – 2004 fiscal year, there were 1,171 clients served by the CFCIP programs. A detailed description of the specific characteristics of the population receiving services as of September 30, 2004 was tabulated. There were 16 fifteen year old youth, 168 sixteen year old participants, and 245 seventeen year old clients. The eighteen year old youth numbered 444 and the number of nineteen year old participants was 176. There were 122 clients served in the twenty years old category. Services were provided to 620 males and 551 females. The majority of clients served were black clients numbering 777, while there were 379 white clients served. Three Hispanic and five American Indians were served. There were four Asian clients served and one client served was in the racially mixed – not black or white category. The race/ethnicity

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of two youth was not known. There were 197 of the clients residing in foster homes and 329 residing in group homes. The number of participating youth living independently was 328. The number of hospitals, medical facilities was 199. Clients numbering 81 were in the other category. The living arrangements of 37 participants were unknown. The data revealed that 858 youth did not have any known disabilities. There were 56 youth with disabilities of mental illness, 222 youth with developmental disabilities and 35 youth with other types of disabilities. Of the youth served, 1,070 were unmarried. One client was married. The number of clients who are parents was 57.

There were 131 youth in foster care for less than six months. There were 201 clients in foster care for between six month but less than one year. The largest group numbering 399 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 105. The remaining youth were in care for the following time: 25 for four years but less than five years, 28 for five years but less than six years, 86 for six or more years. Data was not available on one youth.

Continuing the agency's efforts to assess the CFCIP providers' individual program performance, and meet state and federal requirements, OCS again used the Independent Living Skills Program Monitoring Instrument in their program review of each provider of CFCIP services.

The in-depth monitoring 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.

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 testing reflects 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. Follow-up surveys were obtained from 349 clients who could be located. The surveys are opportunities for the youth to give feedback on services to the service providers. Each CFCIP provider reviews the data tabulated from the surveys from the youth attending that provider's program. That data indicates the overall educational progress of the youth, living arrangement, level of independence, and feedback on services. The data assists the provider in planning for service provision and delivery in the future. Additionally the CFCIP Child Welfare Specialist tabulates the data statewide for all providers. The information is also made available to all providers to improve services.

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The data revealed that there were 40 fifteen year old clients, 119 sixteen year old clients, 138 seventeen year old participants, 42 eighteen year old youth, six nineteen year old clients and one twenty year old participants surveyed using the follow-up instrument. Three youth did not indicate their age. There were 166 male clients and 183 female clients completing the program. The racial composition of the group included 220 black youth, 108 white youth, ten Hispanic, two American Indians, one Asian and seven bi-racial youth. One youth's race was unknown. All 349 youth were unmarried. A majority of the youth, 317, were not parents. However, 24 youth had children, and 6 were pregnant. Two youth did not provide the information.

Presently, 216 of the youth were not yet 18 years old and still in OCS custody and 95 were in custody of the Office of Youth Development. Twenty-six youth were in YAP. Four youth were not participating in YAP. The status of eight youth was unknown.

A significant finding of the survey is that 290 of the 349 clients or 83% are presently continuing in some type of educational or vocational program. Six youth dropped out of an educational or vocational program.

Of the clients continuing their education, there were 203 youth attending a regular school program and 44 were attending adult education/GED classes. Thirty five clients were attending special education programs. Eight young adults were attending college. The high number of youth continuing their education or vocational training is a very encouraging result because educational or vocational training has been shown to be an excellent predictor of how independently youth will be able to function as adults.

Because a majority of the youth surveyed are under 18 years old, they have not yet completed their education or training. Of the youth reporting that they had completed an education or vocational program, eight youth reported earning a high school diploma and 17 reported earning a GED. Five youth had completed a vocational program and eight youth had completed special education programs.

Since most of the young adults surveyed were attending an educational or vocational program, the number of survey participants working full time was only 18 and 38 clients were employed part-time.

The youth remaining in foster care or YAP continued to live in supervised living arrangements such as foster care homes, in relatives' homes, supervised apartments, or group homes. A positive result was that 41 youth lived in apartments or shared apartments. Eight youth were living in college dormitories. Additionally, 87 youth were living with relatives. Ninety seven youth were living in foster homes. Seventy youth were living in group homes. One youth was in the Job Corp. Three youth were living in other types of living arrangements. The independent living skills learned in CFCIP may have contributed to the young adults' ability to successfully maintain themselves in appropriate living arrangements and prevent the homelessness cycle from starting. Of the youth over the age of 18 years old, one youth was in a homeless shelter and one youth was homeless. The living arrangements of 40 youth were unknown.

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Only two of the youth were receiving TANF assistance and 18 were receiving food stamps. Twenty one clients were receiving SSI benefits and twenty one were receiving Social Security benefits. One client was receiving welfare to work services. Three clients were residing in Section 8 housing and three clients were in public housing. One hundred and eighty five youth were receiving Medicaid. Nine youth were receiving child support payments. One youth was receiving Veterans benefits and one was receiving unemployment assistance. Eleven youth were receiving assistance from their families. Twelve youth were receiving educational grants.

The follow-up survey also inquired about community services that clients might be receiving. Fifty-four participants were receiving mental health services and 23 youth were receiving substance abuse services. Forty-three youth were participating in family planning services. One youth was participating in Vocational rehabilitation services. Five youth were receiving drug education services.

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 349 youth surveyed, 307 had positive comments, 34 youth did not comment and 8 youths did not like the services.

When asked what part of CFCIP services was most helpful to the participants, the area of training listed most frequently was money management, education information and employment. 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 a 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 educational and vocational goals and may have contributed to the participants' decision to continue in educational or vocational training.

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, personal and emotional support for youth with positive relationships with adults, financial, housing, counseling, employment, educational and other services were provided to former foster care youth ages 18 years old up to 21 years old to assist them in achieving their educational or

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vocational goals. OCS 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 2005

The Statewide Youth Independent Living Conference was held at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana on June 9 – 11, 2004. The university setting allowed participants an opportunity to experience being on a university campus. The conference was hosted by the CFCIP provider, Family Services 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 and a dance. Youth also had the opportunity to obtain information on admission to universities and colleges in Louisiana and information of employment opportunities at the conference. The conference had over 100 participants and the total cost was paid with CFCIP funds in the amount of \$19,904.75.

On June 14, 2004, Catholic Charities CFCIP provided an Advanced Life Skills Conference for Youth with employment options presented by representatives from local businesses and educational opportunities presented by guest speakers from educational and vocational institutions.

OCS 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 Washington D.C. on April 13 – 15, 2004. The CFCIP Child Welfare Specialist and some CFCIP providers attended the National Independent Living Association and Daniel's Growing Pains in San Antonio, Texas on September 29 – 30, 2004. This conference was an excellent opportunity for providers of CFCIP services and transitional living services to network and coordinate.

Title IV-E training funds were 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. The CFCIP providers conducted 48 two day training sessions on Positive Youth Development and trained 592 foster care staff and foster parents. Eight more sessions are scheduled to be completed by June 30, 2005.

CFCIP providers also presented 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 2006

The Statewide Youth Independent Living Conference will be held in Baton Rouge at Louisiana State University in June 8 – 9, 2005 sponsored by OCS and the CFCIP providers. Youth on the Youth Advisory Boards have been active in planning the conference activities and speakers.

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An Advanced Life Skills Conference for youth in New Orleans will be held in June, 2005 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 in all regions of the State on Positive Youth Development, case Planning and Transition Planning. This training will be funded with Title IV-E funding. Thirty two training sessions are planned in 2005 to 2006.

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.

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, YAP 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.

The CFCIP Program Manager and some CFCIP Providers will attend the Pathways to Adulthood National Conference for Transitional Living/Independent Living in 2005 and the Daniel/NILA "Growing Pains 2005".

Planned CFCIP Changes in 2006

There are several opportunities to strengthen CFCIP in the next year. CFCIP providers will be assuming an important role in the development of transition plans for foster children. Emphasis is being placed on transition planning at an early stage in order to develop the most appropriate plan at the earliest possible date. The perspective used in developing the case plans for youth and families and transition will be conducted from a Positive Youth Development approach.

A key strategy in developing permanency for older youth is identification of permanent contacts and having the permanent contacts involved in the case planning process. CFCIP providers will work closely with OCS staff, CASA and others in identifying permanent contacts, listing the permanent contacts on the CFCIP plan, and involving the permanent contacts in the planning.

Expanding opportunities statewide for vocational testing and counseling regarding higher education and employment for foster children is also a priority this year. OCS will create these opportunities by partnering with the Department of Labor and the Department of Education under their Shared Vision for Youth strategy.

OCS has been utilizing the Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment as a pre and post assessment of independent living skills for youth. OCS will continue to partner with Casey Family Programs in the testing and implementation of the Chafee Assessment that includes the National Youth and Transition Data (NYTD) outcomes data. The new instrument allows OCS to gather the outcomes NYTD data that will be required in the future. It will provide an automated way to gather and analyze the data to improve services.

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Continued emphasis will be placed on collaboration with community organizations in order to maximize services and new funding streams for those services. The CFCIP providers will play a key role in developing these connections statewide.

Services Available to American Indians

In Louisiana, 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 (ETV) and YAP. American Indian foster children have received CFCIP services.

The American Indian tribes in Louisiana had the opportunity to review and comment on Louisiana's five year plan on CFCIP services. Information has been given to the tribes on the providers of CFCIP services. In 2005, a meeting to coordinate all foster care services to American Indian foster children was held in State Office.

Trust Funds

Louisiana does not place CFCIP funds in trust funds for youth.

Request for Fiscal Year 2006 Funds

The request for federal fiscal year 2006 for \$1,358,131.00 is in CFS-101 that is attached. The eligible population is expected to be approximately 2,600 in fiscal year 2006. The estimated number of eligible youth to be served is 1,180. The estimated number of youth 15 to 17 years old to be served will be 472 and youth 18 years up to 21 to be served will be 708.

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**Chafee Foster Care Independence Program – Education and Training Vouchers Program
Report for Fiscal Year 2005 and Application for Federal Fiscal Year 2006**

The Department of Social Services has administered the State's Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) 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 number of Department of Social Services is 726000800.

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

Implementation of the Education and Training Vouchers Program

Eight of the CFCIP providers submitted proposals to deliver ETV services. Proposals were reviewed and contracts were executed for the provision of ETV services in the state for this fiscal year.

Outreach to eligible program participants was achieved in numerous ways. Youth adopted after attaining the age of 16 years were identified by use of our computerized tracking system (TIPS). The youth and their adopted family were contacted by mail informing them of their possible eligibility for the ETV program.

TIPS also identified youth that were otherwise eligible for CFCIP because they were foster children or participants in YAP. The foster care workers were instructed to inform the youth or young adult of their eligibility for the ETV program and the workers referred them to the ETV Coordinator in their region. For Office of Youth Development (OYD) youth, the staff of OYD identified the youth, informed the youth of their eligibility for the ETV program, and referred them to the ETV Coordinator in their region.

TIPS also identified youth who were in post secondary institutions at the time they reached age 21 years and OYD identified OYD youth who were in post secondary institutions at the time they reached 21 years of age. The young adults were contacted by mail at their last known address informing them of their possible eligibility for the ETV program.

All foster care workers and CFCIP providers were asked to inform any young adults no longer in YAP 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 asked to inform any youth indicating on question #57 on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) that they were previously in foster care that they might be eligible for the ETV program.

The Agency coordinated closely with other post secondary education and training programs in Louisiana. Other agencies included the Department of Education, department of Labor's

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Workforce Investment Programs, drop out prevention programs, Big Brothers/Big Sisters of S.E.L.A. and the Orphan Foundation of America.

ETC Coordinators contacted these agencies and made them aware of the ETV program and the eligibility criteria. Youth in the ETV program were referred for any appropriate services available from any of these agencies. Collaboration with all these agencies will continue in the next fiscal year.

Determining and Maintaining Program Eligibility:

With CFCIP funding, OCS 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 YAP who were 18 years up to age 21 years and have aged out of foster care. Youth aging out of foster care included youth who were in foster care on their 18th birthday when custody was vacated. The youth were attending college, high school to obtain a high school diploma, GED classes, vocational training or obtained employment within three months and voluntarily contracted to continue in YAP. These groups were served regardless of Title IV-E eligibility.

Youth eligible for the ETV program 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 with OCS or OYD who were enrolled in 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 were 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 and who have not attained 23 years of age; and
- Youth 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 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.

Eligibility of present foster care status or previous foster care status was determined by a check of TIPS. Eligibility of present OYD status or previous OYD status was determined by a check of the computerized system completed by OYD. Each youth completed the ETV application forms. For youth in post secondary education and training, the youth proved his or her financial need by completing the 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.

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The student provided documentation of the COA, 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 received ETV 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. When the ETV amount was calculated, the payments were divided so only half of the total yearly amount was paid each semester. Upon documentation of successful completion of the first semester, then the remaining half of the amount was paid for the next semester. The ETV Coordinator reported the amount of the ETV assistance to the post secondary institution that the student attended to avoid duplication of benefits.

A young adult attending a post secondary institution must be enrolled in the appropriate number of class hours to qualify the young adult as a full-time student and must complete the required number of hours to qualify as full-time. If a bona fide reason exists why the student cannot enroll full-time, then the approval of the state Office Child Welfare Specialist was required.

The young adult submitted his or her grades each semester or each quarter for the ETV Coordinator to evaluate the young adult's progress and performance and to justify the continued expenditure of funds for education or training. The young adult must have completed the course work for full-time enrollment at the post secondary institution each semester or quarter. The young adult 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.

ETV Case Planning

In order to develop a successful plan for completion of secondary education, the youth in the ETV program participated in a planning conference with the ETV Coordinator. The youth could invite other significant persons such as the foster care worker, foster parent, child care provider, or educational counselors. The focus of the conference was to assess the youth's strengths, needs, set educational goals and develop a plan to achieve the goals. The plan was youth centered and youth driven.

The youth's worker, ETV Coordinator and educational counselors assisted the youth in obtaining information on post secondary education and training alternatives. Youth selected their educational goals and the state funded post secondary institution they wanted to attend.

Each education or training plan for youth in the ETV program specifically identified the following for youth:

- A list of contacts with 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;

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- A plan for completion of 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,
- 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 assures that the youth will receive the services to meet their educational or training needs and achieve their educational goals.

Services

Post secondary educational services under age 18 were funded by a combination of federal funds Title XX Social Services Block Grant (SSBG), Title IV-B, Title IV-E and state funding. SSBG funded post secondary educational assistance for youth in YAP who are 18 years old up to 21 years old. The ETV funds were used to supplement costs of post secondary education not covered by these sources of funding.

For youth in YAP remaining in certified foster homes after age 18, OCS used state funds to pay the foster parents for the room and board costs for the youth to continue in an education or training program. Funding was also available for counseling and tutoring, if needed. For youth living in foster homes and attending education or training programs, OCS paid 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 were paid with SSBG funds. ETV covered other related educational expenses such as transportation and cost of a personal computer for education but did not exceed the lesser of \$5,000 per year or the total cost of attendance.

For youth in YAP living in supervised apartment programs while attending a post secondary educational or training program, the cost of room and board was paid with state funding or CFCIP funds. The reimbursement of the per diem rate included the rent, utilities, clothing, food, personal items and allowance. CFCIP funds were to be used to provide \$300 in start-up costs for youth in the supervised apartment program.

For youth living in supervised apartments and attending education or programs, OCS paid the post secondary institution directly for any costs for tuition, books, and fees that are not funded by PEL grants, scholarships, or any other sources. For youth in YAP, the education costs were paid with SSBG funds. ETV covered other related educational expenses such as transportation, cost of a personal computer for education or any miscellaneous living expenses and did not exceed the lesser of \$5,000 per year or the total cost of attendance.

For youth in YAP living in college dormitories while attending college, OCS paid the college or university directly for any costs for dormitory, meal ticket, tuition, books, and fees that is not

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covered by PELL grants, scholarships, or any other sources. For youth in YAP, the education costs were paid with SSBG funds. Youth received a monthly stipend paid with state funds for the costs of clothing, transportation, personal items, and allowance. This stipend of \$119 per month was paid directly to the youth. However, the actual living expenses of the youth exceeded the monthly stipend provided. ETV funds were used to cover the remaining costs of attendance including living expenses and a personal computer and did not exceed the lesser of \$5,000 per year or the total cost of attendance.

For youth in YAP living independently in their own apartments while attending an education or training program, OCS paid directly to the youth a monthly stipend of \$398 per month with state funds for living expenses. However, the actual cost of living expenses exceeded the monthly stipend. CFCIP funds were used to provide the \$300 in start-up costs and the \$500 for deposits. LIHEAP continued to cover the costs of utility deposits. ETV covered other related educational expenses such as living expenses, transportation, cost of a personal computer for education and did not exceed the lesser of \$5,000 or the total cost of attendance.

For OYD youth in post secondary education or training programs, OYD continued 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 were used to cover tuition, dormitory or living expenses, books, fees, transportation, child care, tutoring, personal computer or any other cost of attendance and did not exceed the lesser of \$5,000 per year or the total cost of attendance.

For foster children under 18 who are attending post secondary education or training programs, OCS continued to pay room and board costs in foster homes, supervised apartments or their own apartments. OCS paid 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 were paid with Title XX, Title IV-B Title IV-E and state funding. ETV funds were used to cover the cost of 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.

Outcomes of the ETV Program

In the 2003 – 2004 fiscal year, there were 134 youth served by the ETV program. At the present time our computerized data information and tracking system does not collect information on foster children's or YAP clients' educational levels or when youth complete the GED or high school diploma. Therefore, a specific number of eligible youth cannot be automatically tabulated. OCS staff were asked to review the youth in their case loads and refer youth who have completed a GED or high school diploma to an ETV provider if the youth's plan was continuing post secondary education. OCS is working with the Information Technology Section developing the new automated data information and tracking to include data on youth's educational status for automated tabulation of youth eligible and needing referral to the ETV program.

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A detailed description of the specific characteristics of the population receiving services as of September 30, 2004 was tabulated. There were four youth still in the custody of OCS, 79 youth voluntarily participating in YAP, 50 youth who were not in YAP, one youth had been adopted and there were four seventeen year old clients. The eighteen year old youth numbered 37 and the number of nineteen year old participants was 32. There were 27 served in the twenty year old category, 22 youth were 21 years old and 12 youth were 22 years old. Vouchers were provided to 42 males and 92 females during this period.

The majority of clients served were black clients numbering 101 while there were 92 white and four Hispanic clients served. On the youth served, 131 were unmarried. Three youth were married, 40 clients were parents and 94 youth were not parents.

There were 64 of the clients residing in their own apartments, and 11 resided with a spouse or friend. Thirty one youth lived in college dormitories. Three youth resided with a biological parent and four lived with a relative. Six youth lived in foster homes and one youth was in the military. The living arrangements of 14 were unknown.

Of the 134 youth served, 76 youth entered college and 58 youth entered vocational training. At the end of the fiscal year, there were six youth who completed their vocational programs and one youth who graduated from college. There were 62 youth in college and making satisfactory progress toward completion of that program. There were 43 youth in vocational training and making satisfactory progress toward completion of that training. Four youth in college had not made satisfactory progress in the college program. Ten youth decided to leave college and eight youth left vocational training.

Regarding outcomes for the youth, 112 of the 134 or 84% of the youth had a good outcome because they either graduated from college or vocational school or continued in college or vocational training with satisfactory progress. Twenty-two youth or 16% did not have a satisfactory outcome as they had unsatisfactory progress, decided to leave the college or vocational training program.

ETV funds were used to pay for tuition, dormitory, meal tickets, 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. The vouchers did not exceed the lesser of \$5,000 per year or the total cost of attendance.

Of the \$383,795 of ETV funds spent, eighty eight percent of the funds were spent on the vouchers and twelve percent spent on staff salaries, travel, supplies and expenses, etc. to operate the program. Specifically, twenty two percent was spent on college or vocational tuition and ten percent was spent for books and supplies. Seven percent was spent on dormitory costs and meal tickets. Thirty three percent was spent on youth's living expenses off campus while attending college or vocational training. Six percent of the funding was spent for computers required for college or vocational training. Ten percent was spent for other items such as tutoring, child care and miscellaneous items.

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A review of each program was completed 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. All programs were in compliance.

Planned Changes for ETV for 2006

The plan for the next fiscal year is to continue the program design and continue to improve the service delivery in the next fiscal year. In order to strengthen the program in the next fiscal year, providers and OCS staff will intensify efforts to market the ETV program not only to currently eligible youth, but younger youth to encourage completion of high school or GED and make youth aware of their eligibility upon completion of high school or GED.

Another priority is outreach to foster parents and child care providers to market the ETV program. ETV providers will educate these groups about ETV and the need to emphasize post secondary education and training for foster youth.

Refinement of the application process, forms and policy will continue. The ETV providers, in coordination with the State Office Child Welfare Specialist, will continue to improve the program and service delivery.

Additionally, ETV providers will continue to increase coordination with post secondary institutions. OCS will work with the Information Technology Section developing the new automated data information and tracking to include data on youth's educational status for automated tabulation of youth eligible and needing referral to the ETV program.

Request for Fiscal Year 2006 Funds

The request for federal fiscal year 2006 is for \$399,073 and is in CFS-101 that is attached. It is estimated that 140 youth will be eligible for ETV next year and 140 youth will be served.

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Federal Fiscal Year 2006
CFCIP ETV Request for funds

Federal Funds Requested \$399.073

State Match Amount \$99.768

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 2006 application for ETV funds.

Application submitted by:

Ann Silverberg Williamson
Name

Secretary, Department of Social Services
Title

Ann S. Williamson/akn
Signature

8/9/05
Date

Approval Date: _____

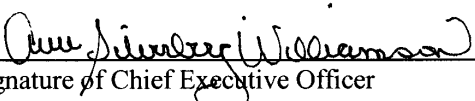
Signature ACF Regional Administrator

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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).



Signature of Chief Executive Officer

11.18.05

Date

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12. PROMOTING SAFE AND STABLE FAMILIES

Goals: Safety, Permanency & Well-Being

Ongoing Services to Achieve Goals: Prevention and support services, crisis intervention, time-limited reunification services and adoption promotion and support services

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

Performance/Achievement:

The Agency has taken a number of actions steps to meet the goals of safety, permanency and well being through the use of Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) resources.

Date	Performance/Achievements/Changes to Policy & Practice
Ongoing	In-home services and post-adoption case management services offered through Foster/Adoptive Family Resource Centers and contracts with individual providers. Major services provided included psychotherapy, planned respite, support groups, parenting and mentoring.
Ongoing	Louisiana Advocacy Support Team (LAST) 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.
Ongoing	Infant Team Assessment Model in Jefferson and Orleans Regions. In the 2005-2006 SFY budget the agency sought additional budgetary support to expand mental health infant team modes to additional regions of the state.
Ongoing	Legal Contracts to Assist with TPR Backlog
Ongoing	Healthy Start Services for first time parents offered in Shreveport Region. This prevention program provides parenting skills.
Ongoing	Consumer/stakeholder participation via OCS committee structure and other special initiatives such as collaboration with OFS on the Healthy Marriages, Fatherhood Initiative.

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Date	Performance/Achievements/Changes to Policy & Practice
Ongoing September 2004	Preventive Assistance (PAF) and Reunification Assistance Funds (RAF) Administration of funds to provide “basics of living” needs and assistance for out of home placement and families being prepared for reunification. Chapter 4, Section 800D & Chapter 5, Section 430B updated to include intensive in-home service providers as eligible to access PAF for OCS clients; Chapter 5, Section 430H revised to include documentation of PAF (on Form 62) and the impact on the prevention of out of home placement.
Ongoing September 2004	Monitored contracts and provided assistance to resource center providers/contractors through regional liaisons, state office staff and monthly monitoring reports.
September 2004	Policy for referral to Child Welfare Family Resource Centers (Chapter 4, Section 800C) The worker and supervisor are expected to discuss possible referral to the center at the time of the validity staffing, if the family has not already been referred. This fiscal year, OCS will be contracting with an entity to evaluate the resource centers.
September, October & December 2004	Convened a workgroup to evaluate services provided through Louisiana Family Resource Centers.
Ongoing January 2005	Recruitment Initiatives: Annual state and regional recruitment/retention plans developed by state office and regions. Retention Survey Findings (RAM 05-004); Use of Governor Blanco recruitment ads in conjunction with regional home development staff appearances on local television stations. (Ram 05-023)
February 2005	Programs to Strengthen Marriage: The Knapsack project was implemented in 29 of the Foster/Adoptive & Child Welfare Family Resource Centers (FAFRC). The project provides intervention focused on relationship building and maintenance. Training on strengthening marriages was provided to Foster/Adoptive & Child Welfare Family Resource Center staff, agency staff representatives and contract monitors in May 2005. Services to strengthen relationships and marriages will continue to be provided in resource centers statewide.
March 2005	Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) Staff attended training on FGDM. The model was piloted in the Baton Rouge Region and was expanded to the Lafayette and Shreveport Regions.
March 2005	Solicitation for Family Resource Centers for 2005-2008 federal funding years. Proposals due April 2005 and selection planned for May 2005.
March/April 2005	Louisiana Family Resource Centers Network & University of Louisiana @ Monroe Title IV-E Child Welfare Program Conference (RAM 05-024) Presentation by Dr. Bavolek who provided assistance with developing a plan to implement the Nurturing Program (parenting program).

Numerous PSSF services are offered via resource centers. There are 21 family resource centers operating statewide through multi-year contracts. Centers provide numerous services including

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respite, supervised family visitation, information, referral and advocacy, parenting classes, psychotherapy, support groups and training. The charts below provide information on the number of clients served in each resource center. The data was obtained from the resource center database.

Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program Family Resource Centers

Foster and Adoptive Family Resource Centers	Region	SFY 04 – 05 Clients Served (7/04-4/1/05)	SFY 05-06 Clients Served	SFY 06-07 Clients Served	SFY 07-08 Clients Served	Final Report Total 2005-2009
VOA – Greater New Orleans	Orleans	223				
VOA – Greater Baton Rouge	Baton Rouge	313				
Bayou Land Families Helping Families	Thibodaux	243				
The Extra Mile, Inc.	Lafayette	90				
Educational & Treatment Council (REST)	Lake Charles	64				
Community Support Programs	Shreveport	24				
ULM – Family Connections	Monroe	240				
New Horizons Youth Service Bureau (Positive Steps)	Covington	127				
Family Services of Greater New Orleans (Family Matters)	Jefferson	131				
VOA – Alexandria	Alexandria	103				
Project Celebration	Shreveport	34				

Child Welfare Family Resource Centers	Region	SFY 04 – 05 Clients Served (7/04-4/1/05)	SFY 05-06 Clients Served	SFY 06-07 Clients Served	SFY 07-08 Clients Served	Final Report Total 2005-2009
VOA – Greater New Orleans (EB)	Orleans	25				
VOA – Greater New Orleans (WB)	Orleans	14				
Southeastern Louisiana University (Discovery)	Baton Rouge	400				
Kingsley House	Thibodaux	133				
Nicholls State University Dept. of Family	Thibodaux	160				

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Child Welfare Family Resource Centers	Region	SFY 04 – 05 Clients Served (7/04- 4/1/05)	SFY 05-06 Clients Served	SFY 06-07 Clients Served	SFY 07-08 Clients Served	Final Report Total 2005- 2009
& Consumer Science						
The Extra Mile, Inc. (Iberia)	Lafayette	109				
The Extra Mile, Inc. (Opelousas)	Lafayette	128				
Beauregard Community Action Association (Evolving Circles)	Lake Charles	211				
VOA – North Louisiana (Alexandria/Pineville)	Alexandria	247				
VOA – North Louisiana (Jena)	Alexandria	83				
Community Support Programs	Shreveport	261				
Project Celebration	Shreveport	184				
ULM – Family Matters	Monroe	174				
ULM – Family Ties (Delhi)	Monroe	178				
New Horizons Youth Service Bureau (Positive Steps)	Covington	220				
Family Services of Greater New Orleans (Real Alternatives)	Jefferson	261				
Family Services of Greater New Orleans (Horizons Unlimited)	Jefferson	270				

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Barriers/Challenges Impacting Goal Attainment:

The Agency has contracted with 15 providers to operate 21 Family Resource Centers statewide. Statistics obtained from the resource centers' database indicates that the resource centers served 5,505 clients from July 1, 2004 through April 1, 2005.

During this planning cycle, the Agency has implemented policies and procedures on referrals to resource centers and the use of the resource centers in the hopes of increasing family support and preservation services available/provided to children and families. At this time, the Agency is unable to determine if the referral procedures and staff training have increased the number of referrals to the resource centers. This is attributed to data entry problems the resource centers are encountering with the current database. In order to counter this down time when using the database, the Agency is working with DSS Information Technology to create an in-house, web-based system. The Agency hopes to have this system in place by September 2005 when the contract for the current database expires.

Transportation continues to be an issue for families accessing services through the resource centers. Lack of funding has also been a major issue prohibiting the expansion of services (including transportation) offered through the resource centers.

In an effort to increase access to services, OCS is no longer differentiating between Foster/Adoptive Family Resource Centers and Child Welfare Family Resource Centers. This will enable providers to serve families in a more holistic manner and this concept is also consistent with moving toward resource families wherein families work together for the best interest of the child. This consolidation will not affect the services provided to foster and adoptive parents because OCS will continue to ensure that they get the services they need. The consolidation may not be possible in all areas of the state; however, the Agency will work with individual centers to create more collaborative efforts with regard to service delivery.

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13. Child Abuse and Prevention Treatment Act (CAPTA)

This section profiles updates and accomplishments in OCS' administration of initiatives to prevent, identify and treat child abuse and neglect situations.

- The statewide Critical Incident Stress Management Team (CISM) and its regional/local peer support and care team counterparts provided valuable services for staff in crisis. Three team meetings were held, in July and October 2004 and May 2005. Members received a day of training from a certified critical incident trainer and all new members of the team receive two separate two-day training sessions before participating in an intervention. Thirteen interventions were conducted, some for individuals and some for groups. The reasons for the interventions varied: worker attacked by client, unexpected death of an employee, sexual harassment, death of a foster child from natural causes, murder of a foster child on run-away, attempted suicide by a foster child, fatality of a child in a caseload, and the death of an agency staff's child in a car accident. One intervention was to assist a community partner through a crisis. The CISM team has helped agency staff cope with the stressful events of child welfare work. Without such assistance, staff has told the CISM team that they would have left the Agency.
- The Agency provides information to communities statewide by distributing brochures and conducting targeted campaigns such as foster care/adoption recruitment and child abuse prevention. Each year the Agency prints and distributes hundreds of its brochures on "Mandated Reporters of Child Abuse or Neglect" and "Understanding Child Protection in Louisiana." The public, including school children working on school projects, frequently ask the Agency for these materials. Meanwhile, staff across the State distributes them as they make presentations to community organizations. These materials are also distributed at state and national conferences such as the Louisiana Prevent Child Abuse Conference.
- The Agency coordinates preventive services with private organizations, particularly with Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana (PCAL), to inform the public on issues of child abuse and neglect. In 2005, Governor Blanco declared March as Child Abuse Awareness Month and agency staff, cooperating with PCAL and other groups, made numerous media appearances. A highlight of these efforts was a children's rally on the steps of the state capitol. Another aspect of this coordination with PCAL is the Agency's support of PCAL's training of mandated reports. In the last year, PCAL has focused on training of educators to recognize signs of abuse and neglect and the requirements of mandated reporters.
- OCS works with Children's Hospital in New Orleans on a program for HIV and/or substance exposed children. This program provides 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

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attention of the child protection system and into foster care. The Children's Hospital FACES program provides case management services, health education, treatment education, mental health and substance abuse counseling, vocational and employment coordination, child development assessments and interventions, transportation assistance, child respite care, and peer advocacy to individuals and families. In one quarter of this state's fiscal year, forty-seven children, twenty-two adults, and twenty-two family units were served. This program has been effective in helping families care for children with very serious developmental issues and in aiding parents with their own mental health and substance abuse issues.

- In 2004 – 2005, staff attended or planned to attend the following major conferences and meetings:
 - The National Resource Center for Organizational Improvement offered three teleconferences in September 2004. Approximately five state office staff attended. The topics were on the use of data, outcome focused contracts with providers, and assessment of training systems.
 - The Child Welfare League of America presented five teleconferences that were attended by approximately one hundred staff statewide. Topics covered issues of child traumatization, child protection services, sensitivity in working with traumatized children, evidence based treatment of child sexual abuse, and children with incarcerated parents.
 - The Domestic Violence Coalition held their annual conference in Baton Rouge in September 2004. Forty staff members attended this three day conference.
 - The American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children will host its national conference in June 2005. Two staff members will attend and participate in panel discussions.
 - Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana's annual conference, "Kids Are Worth It," was held in February 2005 in Baton Rouge. Several hundred staff members attended sessions on community development, poverty, ethical issues for attorneys in child abuse cases, definite findings in child sexual abuse, and many other topics. Other agencies and professionals joined OCS staff in examining child welfare issues.
 - One staff member attended the NCCAN liaison officer meeting in April 2005 sponsored by the Children's Bureau of CAPTA state grantees. Topics included culturally competent approaches to program evaluation, a community-based home visitation program in New York, and the implementation of CAPTA. Along with program initiatives, staff obtained information on CAPTA expectations.
 - Two state office staff members attended the 15th National Child Abuse and Neglect Conference held in Washington, D.C., in April. The focus of the

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conference included the role of judges' collaboration in reforming the system and policy and practice in substantiation of child abuse investigations.

- Staff from all ten regions attended the National Family Preservation Conference in San Antonio, Texas on September 8 – 10, 2004. Topics included family preservation with incarcerated parents, work with African American families, and family group decision making. By adding knowledge, perspective and practice skills, the conference increased OCS staff's skills in maintaining family units.
- Staff from all regions attended the 2nd Annual Conference of the Louisiana Foundation Against Sexual Assault on December 8 – 10, 2004, in Baton Rouge. The conference provided staff with timely information and training on the community support system needed to aid the healing process of victims of sexual assault. Topics included the prosecution of sexual assault cases, collaboration in underserved communities, and creating cooperative community teams.
- Two Family Group Decision Making workshops were held in March 2005. Thirty persons from OCS and collaborative agencies participated in the orientation and workshop. Participants were trained to facilitate the family group decision making process with families.
- The North American Council for Adoptable Children held their annual conference in July 2004, in Minneapolis. Staff from all regions and from state office attended sessions on topics such as adoption awareness in schools, legislating adoption reform, advocating for post-adoption services, and mental health aspects of adoption and foster care. The importance of post-adoptive services and funding for those services was emphasized at this conference.
- The annual conference of the Louisiana Adoption Advisory Board was held in May 2005. Over fifty regional and state office staff attended, along with adoptive parents and community partners such as New Orleans Catholic Charities. The focus of the sessions was on adolescence, attachment issues, and brain development and how counselors should approach counseling with adoptive parents and adolescents. Staff was given specific guidance on what to expect from counselors who work with adolescents and adoptive parents.
- The 2nd Annual ACF State System Summit (March 21 – 24, 2005) was attended by state office staff responsible for quality assurance information data. Sessions included managing alignment of technology with practice and implementing tools for data quality. Particularly helpful was information on the use of Web Focus, a method which is seen as easier to use in the reporting of outcome data.
- Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) has been expanded from the Baton Rouge region to include Shreveport and Lafayette regions. The program has been operating for three years in the Baton Rouge region. In 2003, ten family conferences were held and in 2004, eighteen were held. An evaluation of results is now in progress, but data available

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at this time indicates that repeat maltreatment after six months is less than the national standard (3.3% vs. 6.1%) and that placement disruption is also less than the national standard (no placement disruptions vs. 86.7%).

- The Agency improved its data collection and reporting of data in order to better determine the successfulness of interventions with families. Staff consulted with the Walter R. MacDonald organization on such topics as the collection of data for recurrence of abuse and length of stay in foster care. The result has been the development of new outcome reports, including recurrence, case closure, placement with siblings. These reports are now sent to the management staff statewide.
- Statutorily, Louisiana is only required to have three citizen review panels, but the Agency has worked with concerned citizens around the State and developed five citizen review panels. Meetings are held quarterly in three regions, Monroe, Shreveport and Covington; and two parishes, Beauregard and Rapides. All but one filed reports and offered recommendations that are being reviewed at this time. (See the section below for additional information on Citizen Review Panels.)
- The Agency submitted legislation that expanded the definition of neglect to include newborns affected by prenatal illegal drug exposure caused by the parent. The state legislature approved the legislation and the governor signed it on June 30, 2005. This change was taken to bring state law into compliance with the 2003 Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act amendment that required states to develop policy to address the needs of infants born and identified as being affected by illegal substance exposure. The goal of the legislation is that by early intervention infants will have better development outcomes. The legislation also addresses exposure. The legislation also contained a provision that the Act would not be enforced until the promulgation of rules and regulations by the Department of Social Services.
- Changes in CAPTA for 2005 – 2006, the Department will work with the medical community to develop rules to enforce the Act, with the first meeting of the Department with the medical community set for November 10, 2005.

14. Citizen Review Panels (CRP) 2002 & 2003 Recommendations

- Unmarked state cars should be used in the transportation of children in agency custody and during visits at the child's school. (This recommendation also came from surveys of youth in care.)

Update: In April 2005 the Agency received 30 unmarked cars for parish and regional offices. After review of this issue in the state level CQI team and learning that other state agencies have unmarked cars, OCS was able to make another request to the Division of Administration for unmarked cars in order to protect the confidentiality of the children in our care. While every office may not receive unmarked cars at this time, OCS will be obtaining both marked and unmarked cars in the future. The unmarked cars are to be

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used by adoption and foster care staff and the marked cars will continue to be used by child protection investigation staff.

- OCS could develop 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.

Previous Response to CRP: 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.

Previous Response to CRP: 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.

Update: The Agency worked with PCAL on the content development of this video. It is now a part of the training conducted regionally by the local PCAL offices. In addition, there is currently a joint project with the University of New Orleans College of Education and Human Development and The Task Force on Child Sexual Abuse, New Orleans, Louisiana to undertake this initiative. The statewide project is called "Breaking the Silence of Child Abuse" and targets mandated reporters. OCS and PCAL also contributed to the project. PCAL developed material and is taking the lead in conducting the training, which targets the school as well.

- Mandated reporters should receive feedback.

Previous Response to CRP: 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 or not, is limited only to the status of the

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investigation. Only in cases where the reporter is providing some form of treatment to the family is limited information shared.

Update: The Agency continues to stand by the policy of providing limited information to mandated reporters. The OCS Form 480, Notice to Reporter, has been revised and will be used to notify all reporters, who identify themselves, of the intake decision for their report, but no disclosures involving case activities will be provided. Additionally, legislation proposed by the Department (SB160) promotes the exchange of information between the Department and mandated reporters when appropriate to improve service delivery to the child.

- Staff shortages 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.

Previous Response to CRP: We will have to continue to adjust to change in the SFY 2004-2005. The 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 DSS, Ann Silverberg Williamson.

Update: OCS submitted a request for positions in the last legislative sessions and as a result will actualize the following staff increases. The Agency has a total of 43 additional positions: 10 Family Services workers, 6 Home Development workers, and 27 Foster Care assistants. These expanded service positions will assist staff in fulfilling job duties and the Agency will maximize salary funds.

- 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.

Previous Response to CRP: 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. This concern was also forwarded to the Secretary of DSS.

Update: There are no plans at this time to provide supplemental pay for hazardous duty positions, since the Department continues to experience budget adjustments. Governor Blanco's proposed a \$18.1 billion state budget for the upcoming fiscal year has been presented to the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget, and will be finalized through the legislative process that begins April 25. Until it is adopted by the Legislature, there will likely be adjustments. Currently, the budget calls for a 3.5 percent reduction for DSS.

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- Mandatory Reporting should be reviewed to ensure 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.

Previous Response to CRP: 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.

PCAL developed a video around child abuse and neglect that the Agency is also studying for use. In addition, OCS is 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.

Update: There is currently a joint project with the University of New Orleans College of Education and Human Development and The Task Force on Child Sexual Abuse, New Orleans, Louisiana to undertake this initiative. The statewide project is called "Breaking the Silence of Child Abuse" and targets mandated reporters. OCS and PCAL also contributed to the project. PCAL developed the training materials and is taking the lead in conducting the training that targets the school as well.

- 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.

Previous Response to CRP: OCS does not exercise direct influence on judges or judicial proceedings. The issue has been referred to the Supreme Court Improvement Project (CIP) for their review. 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.

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Update: The Supreme Court Improvement Project as indicated did not take up this issue. However, it is being resubmitted for a possible agenda item for an upcoming meeting. There continues to be dialog around various court models, particularly in the area of a unified court. Calcasieu Parish has the only judicial district with such a court.

- 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.

Previous Response to CRP: 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.

Update: The Field and Community Liaison Section in state office, resource centers and OCS regional staff worked together to educate field personnel about the services of the centers, the referral process, and the benefit of the services to their clients. This coordinated effort is ongoing.

- 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.

Previous Response to CRP: DSS/OCS is currently working on a 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.

Update: There is currently a joint project with the University of New Orleans College of Education and Human Development and the Task Force on Child Sexual Abuse, New Orleans, Louisiana to undertake this initiative. The statewide project is called "Breaking the Silence of Child Abuse" and targets mandated reporters. OCS and PCAL also contributed to the project. PCAL developed material and is taking the lead in conducting the training which targets the school as well.

- 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.

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Previous Response to CRP: 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) 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, 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.

PCAL has developed a video around child abuse and neglect which we are also studying for use in educating the public. In addition we are coordinating these efforts into a state wide public education plan that will provide opportunities for the general public to become educated about the agency and to have a more realistic and accurate public perception of OCS' programs, services, and limitations.

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Update: See the update on the previous issue.

- 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.

Previous Response to CRP: This recommendation was referred to the Department's Bureau of General Counsel. There are differences between warrants and investigations into child abuse and neglect. DSS Bureau of General Counsel is recommending that this issue be further explored as it involves multi-levels of law enforcement as well as the judicial system. The judicial system is the authorizing agent for warrants. Learning the current processes/criteria in existence for wants/warrants is needed and OCS will provide a response after further exploration.

Update: There has been no further progress made on this issue.

- That OCS at the State level work to arrange within bounds of confidentiality that all appropriate state computers be alerted of a protective service 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 OCS, and the child care and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) programs within the OFS could make such a request possible. A workgroup has been established to examine what information can be shared within DSS. One of the issues with this concept includes the need for other agencies to make reports once they are notified of a protective service alert.

Update: The Agency currently has available on its computers the capacity to issue protective service alerts. When families known to the Agency move across parish lines, staff has the ability to input the alert into their family's computerized case data. This same feature will be included in the new ACCESS (information management) system.

- 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 legislation 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. During the 2004 legislative session, DSS/OCS resubmitted the legislation for consideration. The legislation recently passed and is awaiting the governor's signature.

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Update: This procedure was signed into law and is currently being utilized by the Agency.

- The SECURE plan proposed to reorganize the OCS regions should not cause disruption/division to OCS Region IX in any way.

Previous Response to CRP: 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.

Update: The Department opted to implement the "No Wrong Door" concept, which will not impact the structure of Covington OCS Region; however, effective September 2005 the Orleans Region and the Jefferson Region will be consolidated.

- Greater focus on the benefits of enrollment in the OCS Young Adult Program (YAP) should be included within the curriculum of the statewide OCS independent living classes which are conducted for children in foster care at age 16, and stronger educational awareness of the benefits of continued OCS services through YAP should be strongly incorporated into the OCS independent living classes.

Previous Response to CRP: 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.

Update: The Foster Child Handbook (OCS 402), for children in foster care, has been developed and disseminated to all children in care. It is also available in the Department's online policy for staff's use and review.

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2004 Citizen Review Panels Annual Report

Louisiana has five (5) Citizen Review Panels (CRP) located in various areas of the State. Two of the panels are parish based; Beauregard (located in the southeastern quadrant of the State within the Lake Charles Region) and Rapides (located in the center of the State within the Alexandria Region). The additional three (3) panels are regionally based and is made up of a number of parishes. These panels are the Covington, Monroe, and Shreveport Regions.

Shreveport Region

Membership

Nadalie Thomas	Richard Rodgers	Margaret Basco
Judi Christian	St. Larry Nunnery	Jill Welsh
Charles Beckhan	James Smith	Lucy Becken
Rep. Lydia Jackson	Fayrine Gilbert	Trudie Abner
Rebecca Evans-Kelly	Rep. Cedric Glover	

2004 Activities:

The Shreveport CRP met a total of five (5) times during the year: February 17, 2002, April 20, 2004, June 15, 2004, August 17, 2004, and November 9, 2004. Some of the activities and topics discussed included the following:

- “Safe Haven” abandon baby legislation
- Public education:
 - Funding opportunities for public information through the local Child Death Review Panel
 - Collaboration with the local Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana (PCAL) agency for mandatory reporter training
 - Brochures that would alert parents to the dangers of sleeping with their children (co-sleeping campaign)
- Networking with other panels
- Louisiana House Bill 663 Act 103: New legislation that provides for the availability of criminal record history information to child protection staff to adequately assess the safety and risk of children during investigations and/or services
- Agency presentations from the Adoptions and Foster Care programs, and review of a case from the Child Death Review Panel

2004 Recommendation/Agency Responses

CRP Recommendation: We would respectfully request that DSS/OCS consider identifying sources of appropriate training for forensic interviews and to fund such

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training for not only their own personnel but also any law enforcement or district attorney personnel who might be interested.

Agency Response: This recommendation has a fiscal impact; therefore, it has been forwarded to the Deputy Assistant Secretary for review. Upon completion of that review, you will be notified of the Agency's position on your recommendation.

Monroe Region

Membership

Stacey Moak, Ph.D
Becky 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

2004 Activities:

The Monroe CRP was initially convened in Quachita Parish on December 13, 2001. The panel met a total of (4) four times this past year: January 21, 2004, April 21, 2004, July 21, 2004, and November 17, 2004.

The panel identified the following areas to discuss/review:

- Mandated reporting and confidentiality, with an emphasis on the school setting
 - The panel agreed to address the issue and explore strategies for training
- Panel recruitment, retention, and effectiveness
- Improving the local child welfare agency's image in the community
- Panel members as advocates for foster/adoptive families to ensure that they have the resources to foster and/or adopt

2004 Recommendations/Agency Responses

CRP Recommendation:A comprehensive effort to increase knowledge and awareness of OCS' role and work should be undertaken throughout the region. A Children's Trust Fund Grant could possibly fund the effort.

Agency Response: Educating the public about OCS' role in combating child abuse and neglect is an ongoing effort. As the Department's financial resources continue to decrease, it is important that we collaborate with our community partners, stakeholders and advocates to continue to educate the public about what we do to assist families when abuse and/or neglect is identified. Applying for funds through the Children's Trust Fund offers a great opportunity to utilize the collaborative expertise of the panel to advance this issue. The timeline for submitting a proposal is as follows:

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Timeframe	Activity
Mid- November	Notice of availability of funds with grant Applications announced (mail /newspaper)
November and December	Statewide grant-writing workshops
January	Deadline for grant applications
February and March	Grants reviewed
April – May	Board approval/Awards announced
July	Grant program begins (using SFY July 1 – June 30)

CRP Recommendation: Training opportunities to in-service school staff and teachers should be sought to insure that they fully understand their role as mandatory reporters and what they can expect once reports are made. Develop informational materials that enhance knowledge and awareness of teachers on child welfare issues and mandatory reporting. A Children’s Trust Fund Grant could possibly fund this effort as well.

Agency Response: There is currently a joint project with the University of New Orleans College of Education and Human Development and the task force on child sexual abuse in New Orleans to undertake this initiative. The statewide project is called “Breaking the Silence of Child Abuse” and targets mandated reporters. OCS and PCAL also contributed to the project.

PCAL developed the training materials and is taking the lead in conducting the training that targets the school as well. This provides an excellent opportunity for interested panel members to become involved in either assisting with the training or providing additional supports as needed by the local PCAL (CRPs are encouraged to contact PCAL representatives on the panel for additional information/coordination).

CRP Recommendation: Retention of panel members is a concern. Efforts need to be undertaken to engage members more fully, provide orientation, and sustain their commitment to the panel. Utilize strategies offered at the Together We Can Conference, if possible.

Agency Response: Panel member retention is a concern of all the panels. The key to retention is to recruit members around their particular interest or interests in child welfare services. The panel was directed to the National Citizen’s Review Panel website, www.uk.edu/SocialWork/crp, to the resources link and the document entitled **Citizens Review Panel Guidelines and Protocols**. The information Blake Jones, National Citizen Review Panel Coordinator, shared at the Together We Can Conference comes from this document. It is a great resource for training and recruitment of panel members, which all of our panels will be asked to utilize in the future. We are in the process of planning a meeting of all the panels to provide guidance in this and other areas that may strengthen panel effectiveness.

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CRP Recommendation: Identify efforts taken at teacher preparatory institutions that develop knowledge and skills of teachers in child abuse awareness, recognition, and reporting. Materials and resources should be provided. PCAL should be sought as a partner in this effort.

Agency Response: Please see the response to question # 2.

Beauregard Parish

Membership

John Marcello
Don Wells
Jeanne Faciane
Monya Gott
Tanya Craig

Ron Hebert
Rev. Alan Knuckles
Robert Mcullough
Terri O'Hara
Lisa Guillet

2004 Activities:

The Citizen's Review Panel of Beauregard Parish has spent most of 2004 on education of OCS policies and procedures. Each meeting involved OCS representatives sharing information on the different departments under the OCS umbrella, with question/answers and discussion. Gayle Hodnett, with BeauCare, agreed to co-chair the panel with Lisa Guillet. Gayle has been actively recruiting new panels members to get a more diverse panel representative of Beauregard Parish for 2005. The panel sponsored the fourth annual "Hope for Beauregard Kids" during April for Child Abuse Prevention Month and the event continues to improve each year.

2004 Recommendation/Agency Response

CRP Recommendation: The panel would like more feedback on its' recommendations (including CRP's from other areas of the State) from OCS. If panel members do not feel that their recommendations are given any serious consideration or do not see any explanation or change, then CRP's will not feel that their time is valued and that they are being productive. This will negatively impact membership on the Citizen's Review Panels. The panel also suggests more communication and networking between the CRP's throughout the State.

Agency Response: 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. To that end, we are striving to provide a response to all panel recommendations within three (3) months of receipt of the annual report. We are also in the process of planning a fall meeting of all the panels to provide an opportunity for networking and guidance to strengthen panel effectiveness.

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Future Plans

- Working with state and local OCS to make the CRP a more viable, productive mechanism to improve services to children and families.
- Through review of OCS cases, policy and procedure, the panel can determine if there are any gaps in our community and attempt to find ways to address these issues to further benefit children and families.
- Maintaining membership in the panel by diligently working on all of the above so that members feel as though their contribution is valuable.

Rapides Parish

Membership:

Sara Alford	Stacy Bender	Gary Billingsley
Linda Bordelon	Sarah Brame	Marian Brian
Lillie Evans	Arthur Johnson	Michael Johnson
Martha Kendrick	Linda McCobbie	Susan Ford Fiser
Beth Lord Whittington		

2004 Activities:

The Agency has not received this panel's annual report.

Covington Region

Membership

Terrie Martin, R.N.	Cindy Richard
Sarah Kent, LCSW	H. Gene Richard
Ila Dietrich	Martha Green
Dawn Mabry, M.D.	Jean Voohtrees

2004 Activities

The Covington CRP met a total of (5) five times this past year: January 20, 2004, April 20, 2004, August 24, 2004, and September 20, 2004, and October 4, 2005. The panel identified the following areas to discuss/review:

- Recruitment and retention of new panel members
- OCS training for its workforce, effectiveness and needs
- The Department of Education and the TASC program, with emphasis on the problems in the region
- Community collaboratives
- Review a case from the Child Death Review Panel

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2004 Recommendation/Agency Response

CRP Recommendation: The Truancy Assessment Center (TASC) is an excellent program. TASC workers are mandated reporters. Since truancy can be a flag for child abuse we recommend that DSS/OCS communicate with the Supreme Court who funds this program and ask that the court enforce compliance in all areas of Region IX. We suggest OCS do whatever it can to support this vital intervention program.

Agency Response: The Supreme Court no longer administers the TASC funding. It is now administered through the LSU, Office of Social Service Research & Development. Reducing truancy and its causes is the responsibility of multiple agencies and TASC partners should include all of the agencies that share that responsibility. Their processes encourage joint "ownership" of the TASC purpose, and makes a clear statement that TASC is not so much a place or program, but a way for agencies with shared responsibility to organize themselves around a common purpose. As OCS relies on community partnerships to carry out its mission, we are in support of the TASC program. However, we encourage you and your constituency to also partner with the program in its efforts to decrease truancy in your region.

You can gain further information on TASC and what you can do to help by visiting their website at www.socialwork.lsu.edu/ossrd/taschome.htm.

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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.

Benchmarks	Projected Date of Achievement	Progress Towards Achievement
<p>1. Establish a technologically sound, SACWIS-like system, currently called “A Comprehensive Enterprise Social Services System” (ACESS), 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.</p>	<p>March 2007</p>	<p>The requirements for the design of Case and Service Plans, for use in OCS child welfare programs, as well as other case management programs operated by DSS, has been developed conceptually and a draft requirements design document has been delivered by the vendor working with the state for the design of the ACESS system. The detail design of the Case Management component of the ACESS design is scheduled to be delivered and will subsequently be reviewed by project staff and OCS staff who participated in the design.</p> <p>The Manage Case/Service Plans function will provide a tool that allows staff working with clients to identify what must be done to meet the program goals, to create a plan of supportive services to help clients meet those goals, to document a history of services previously provided, and to track their progress in meeting those objectives.</p> <p>The Manage Case/Service Plans function will support the generation of formal case and service plans, which will include information generated elsewhere in the ACESS application. The Manage Case/Service Plan tool will present users with a common structure to develop and modify Case/Service Plans, and to track progress in meeting the plan objectives. Each Case/Service Plan type will consist of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objectives, which define goals for the client and worker for the Case/Service Plan;

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Benchmarks	Projected Date of Achievement	Progress Towards Achievement
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities, which establish concrete activities in support of a specific Objective; • Owners, who are assigned to perform specific Activities; • Start and End Dates, which are assigned to each Activity • Progress Measures, which provide a structured indication of the progress made in conducting each Plan, Objective, or Activity. <p>In addition, each Case/Service Plan type will provide a comments field to allow workers to explain or clarify elements of the Case/Service Plan. In addition, each Case/Service Plan type will include plan-specific supporting pages, associated with certain Objectives, which will allow users to link to and maintain additional information related to the Plan (e.g., a visitation schedule).</p> <p>The Case Management component of ACCESS is scheduled for implementation in 2007.</p>

Action Step 2: Expand collaborative strategies and implement plans with community partners.

Benchmarks	Projected Date of Achievement	Progress Towards Achievement
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	The National Council of State Legislatures provided technical assistance to the State in February 2005. Mr. Steve Christian testified to the Louisiana Joint Committees of the Health and Welfare Committee’s Task Force on Foster Care. His expert testimony provided a discussion of how well Louisiana is serving children who are in foster care placement. Primary focus: educational needs of foster children, i.e., maintaining the same school when possible between placements for stability and special

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Benchmarks	Projected Date of Achievement	Progress Towards Achievement
		education needs considerations for those children aging out of foster care. He also provided testimony on the Child and Family Services Review and the Program Improvement Plan. The primary reason the State asked for technical assistance was to help state legislators understand foster care funding issues and needs. It is anticipated that Mr. Christian will be asked to return to the State to meet with a larger group of legislators to reinforce foster care needs and help with funding support in the future.

Action Step 3: Maximize use of external and Federal level funding.

Benchmarks	Projected Date of Achievement	Progress Towards Achievement
1. Monitor availability of funding opportunities, disseminate internally and externally, and monitor internal grant applications.	December 2004	The Planning and Accreditation Section has continued to monitor the availability of funding opportunities through use of the Federal Register, the publication of the Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration. In addition, through partnership with the Dallas Regional ACF Office, the section develops and submits Annual Progress and Services Reports, the funding application for Title IV-B, subparts 1 & 2 as well as the Social Services Block Grant and Title IV-E.

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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.

Benchmarks	Projected Date of Achievement	Progress Towards achievement
1.Continue to 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-completed Ongoing	Training has been provided on an ongoing basis. The Agency will continue to provide training based on the PIP and the training needs identified through the survey conducted by Southern University at Baton Rouge. (Survey results indicated that staff is in need of training on how to work with challenging children. This is also part of the PIP. Also of note, many of the trainings requested/identified in the survey was already planned in PIP.)
Benchmarks	Projected Date of Achievement	Progress Towards Achievement
2. Revise and issue staff development catalog to managers, supervisors, and line staff and foster parents	May 2004, Distribution: May 2005	The staff training catalog was revised and issued to staff and stakeholders in May 2005.
Benchmarks	Projected Date of Achievement	Progress Towards Achievement
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	Training has been provided. Additional supervisory training will be provided beginning March 2005 through March 2006. Two supervisors in each region will be trained and receive mentoring from a nationally recognized consultant.

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Action Step 2: Maximize inclusion and participation of universities for needs assessment and collaboration.

Benchmarks	Projected Date of Achievement	Progress Towards Achievement
1. Develop and continue contract with Southern University at Baton Rouge 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, Training Section Director to finalize completed contract for 2005-2006.
Benchmarks	Projected Date of Achievement	Progress Towards Achievement
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 – 2008	

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16. Training

During SFY 2004 – 2005 the Agency added and updated several training topics into the training curriculum. New training was conducted on the following topics:

- Prenatally exposed children.
- Substance Abuse – OCS collaborated with a National Resource center and expanded the Substance Abuse training to include other mental health issues such as co-morbidity.
- Act 710 - new worker training was updated to include revised safety and risk assessments.
- The Positive Youth Development training was expanded to include transition planning and transition elements of case planning.
- In Spring 2005, the Agency conducted a training needs survey. The survey helped identify staff, foster/adoptive parent and Tribal training needs by asking respondents to identify their top three (3) training needs, identify possible trainers and list challenges that training could address.

New training planned for SFY 2005 – 2006 includes:

- Domestic violence – OCS collaborated with Louisiana Coalition on Domestic Violence to develop this training package.

17. Program Improvement Plan

A comprehensive review of the child welfare system in Louisiana, which included statewide assessment, the CFSR, and the State Data Profile on child welfare data from 1999 through 2001, culminated in the publication of the Final Report, Louisiana Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) on February 5, 2004.

This review of the child welfare system examined seven systemic factors and seven child welfare outcome factors. The child welfare system was found to be in substantial compliance with all seven systemic factors, and with one of the child welfare outcome factors: Permanency Outcome 2, preservation of the continuity of family relationships and connections for children.

The remaining six child welfare outcomes were identified as areas needing improvement and presented opportunities to further examine its practices, policies, and resources, and to develop strategies to improve services to children and their families. As a result, DSS/OCS developed a PIP to serve as a strategic guide to program improvement. The PIP was designed to work synergistically with CFSP to achieve Louisiana's child welfare goals.

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The importance of the involvement, collaboration, and participation of stakeholders was recognized throughout the review process and continued in the development and implementation of the PIP. Thus, stakeholders were included in workgroup meetings, in the PIP Steering Committee, in collaboration via teleconferences and consultations, and in review and request for comments on the proposed PIP. More than eighty participants were involved in the extensive and comprehensive process of developing the PIP, and a number of stakeholders continue to be involved in PIP implementation.

Implementation:

Implementation of Louisiana's PIP began in October 2004, and will continue through eight quarters. Within each of the major outcome areas identified as needing improvement, specific items are noted as methods of achieving improvement in each outcome area. Each item is broken down into action steps, and each of the action steps is further defined by specific benchmarks to be completed within a specific quarter by an identified responsible party. The benchmarks build upon one another throughout the eight quarters of PIP implementation.

The number items, action steps, and benchmarks for the entire eight quarter PIP reporting period is reflected in the chart below:

<u>Outcome</u>	<u>Items</u>	<u>Action Steps</u>	<u>Benchmarks</u>
Safety 1	3	12	67
Safety 2	1	4	19
Permanency 1	5	13	48
Well Being 1	3	8	38
Well Being 2	1	2	9
Well Being 3	1	1	8
<u>Total</u>	14	40	189

PIP progress reports have been submitted for the first two quarters of PIP implementation documenting achievement of 81 benchmarks, 47 in the first quarter and 34 in the second quarter. Louisiana provided relevant and accurate data to measure progress on 12 of the 14 items during the first quarter, and on 13 of the 14 items during the second quarter.

Benchmark Achievement:

First Quarter:

The 47 benchmarks accomplished during the first quarter represent 45 benchmarks achieved at the state level and two achieved at the regional level. Specific information regarding the parishes included in the CFSR is addressed in each of the two regional level benchmarks.

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Second Quarter:

The 34 benchmarks accomplished during the second quarter represent 29 benchmarks achieved at the state level, including one that had been originally targeted for regional completion (the training needs assessment), and five benchmarks achieved at the regional level. Again, specific information regarding the parishes included in the CFSR is addressed in each of the five regional level benchmarks.

Data:

First Quarter:

The data reported during the first quarter indicated that Louisiana had achieved PIP goals on four items:

- **Safety Outcome 2, Item 3:** Services to protect child(ren) in the home and prevent removal. The PIP goal was established at 84%, and the first quarter data outcome was 90.5%.
- **Permanency Outcome 1, Item 7:** Permanency goal for child. The PIP goal was established at 84%, and the first quarter outcome was 88.9%.
- **Well Being Outcome 1, Item 17:** Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents. The PIP goal was established at 76%, and first quarter outcome was 81.4%.
- **Well Being Outcome 3, Item 23:** Mental health needs of the child. The PIP goal was established at 78%, and the first quarter outcome was 86.7%.

Second Quarter:

The data reported during the first quarter indicated that Louisiana had achieved PIP goals on five items.

- **Safety Outcome 2, Item 3:** Services to protect child(ren) in the home and prevent removal. The PIP goal was established at 84%, and the second quarter data outcome was 94.4%.
- **Permanency Outcome 1, Item 7:** Permanency goal for child. The PIP goal was established at 84%, and the second quarter outcome was 91.5%.
- **Well Being Outcome 1, Item 17:** Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents. The PIP goal was established at 76%, and second quarter outcome was 87.1%.
- **Well Being Outcome 3, Item 23:** Mental health needs of the child. The PIP goal was established at 78%, and the second quarter outcome was 87.8%.
- **Well Being Outcome 1, Item 18:** Child and family involvement in case planning. The PIP goal was established at 74%, and second quarter outcome was 75.7%.

Significant Achievements:

During the first two quarters of PIP implementation, Louisiana has demonstrated achievement of data goals related to nearly 36% of the items identified in the PIP, and has achieved nearly 43%

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of the total number of identified benchmarks. While achieving all of the identified benchmarks will be cumulatively important to improving services to children and their families in Louisiana, several of the benchmarks already achieved have been identified as being especially significant:

- Identifying factors associated with repeat maltreatment, developing an appropriate screening instrument, and expanding the use of the safety/risk assessment instrument to foster care cases
- Developing screening instruments for mental health, substance abuse, and domestic violence and expanding training curricula to include these issues
- Continuing faith-based recruitment efforts, developing protocols for maintaining contact with potential foster/adoptive parents, and developing the Resource Family home model
- Adding early identification and location of parents and other relatives to Bench Cards for judges, and completing a Memorandum of Understanding with CASA for assistance in identification and location of parents and other relatives
- Identifying critical educational issues for children in foster care and beginning collaboration with educational officials at the State and local levels
- Developing a handbook for adolescents in foster care and development of a training curriculum to address the needs of this vulnerable population
- Implementing the 2-1-1 social service information system in every parish

The progress made and reported in the first and second quarter PIP reports represent a significant commitment to improvement in the child welfare system in Louisiana, not only by DSS/OCS staff, but also by the numerous stakeholders who have diligently and willingly provided assistance in accomplishing the benchmarks. Louisiana is committed to continuing the process of child welfare program improvement throughout the two-year period covered by the PIP and beyond.

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18. Financial Comparison, Title IV-B, Subpart 2 Expenditures and Annual Budget Request for 2005 – 2006

Financial records comparing federal fiscal year (FFY) state and local share spending for Title IV-B, Subpart 2 against 1992 base year amount and maintenance of effort and a comparison of FFY state expenditures against 1979 Title IV-B, Subpart 1 state expenditures indicate that the maximum amount expended for maintenance has remained the same since FFY 1979. The federal share is \$1,301,635.

Title IV-B, Subpart 2 expenditures for family preservation, community-based family support, time-limited family reunification, adoption promotion and support services and administrative costs are listed below.

FFY 2004 Expenditures by purpose		
Family Preservation	\$2,599,480	22.50%
Family Support Services	\$2,599,480	22.50%
Time-Limited Family Reunification Services	\$2,599,480	22.50%
Adoption Promotion and Support Services	\$2,599,480	22.50%
Administration	\$1,155,324	10.00%
TOTAL	\$11,553,244	100.00%

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OMB APPROVAL # 0980-0047
Approved through July 1, 2005

CFS-101, PART II: ANNUAL SUMMARY OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES
State of ITO Louisiana
For FY October 1, 2005 TO September 30, 2006

SERVICES/ACTIVITIES	ESTIMATED EXPENDITURES BY PROGRAM (IN THOUSANDS)										(m) GEOG. AREA TO BE SERVED	
	(a) I-CWS	(b) II-PSSF	(c) CAPTA*	(d) CFCID	(e) TITLE IV-E	(f) TITLE XX (SSBG)	(g) TITLE IV-A (TANF)	(h) TITLE XIX (Medicaid)	(i) OTHER FED PROG.	(j) STATE LOCAL DONATED FUNDS		(k) NUMBER TO BE SERVED (X) Families (Y) Individuals
1) PREVENTION & SUPPORT SERVICES (Family Support)	2,111	2,860	117			4,048	2,540		208	3,984	27,393	All eligible children & adults
2) PROTECTIVE SERVICES	1,439		274			1,547	970		486	480	27,280	Reports of abuse/neglect
3) CRISIS INTERVENTION (Family Preservation)												Statewide
(a) PREPLACEMENT PREVENTION										477	13,623	Child/Fam. visit eligibles
(b) REUNIFICATION SERVICES		1,429								477	7,122	All children in Foster Care
(c) TIME-LIMITED FAMILY REUNIFICATION SERVICES		1,429								953	7,122	All children in Foster Care
4) ADOPTION PROMOTION AND SUPPORT SERVICES		2,860								953	919	Foster children per par. & except.
5) FOSTER CARE MAINTENANCE: (a) FOSTER FAMILY & RELATIVE FOSTER CARE	1,302				18,934		6,828	14,191	2,861	15,398	7,122	All children in Foster Care
(b) GROUP/INSTITUTIONAL CARE					10,195		3,677		150	4,413	1,795	All eligible
6) ADOPTION SUBSIDY PMTS.					11,034					4,776	4,588	All eligible
7) INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES					34,380					494	1,320	All eligible
8) ADMINISTRATION & MANAGEMENT	1,247	1,118		1,978	6,962	407				35,171		All eligible
9) STAFF TRAINING		153				204				2,371		
10) FOSTER PARENT RECRUITMENT & TRAINING						203						
11) ADOPTIVE PARENT RECRUITMENT & TRAINING												
12) CHILD CARE RELATED TO EMPLOYMENT/TRAINING									61,344	15,000	46,489	All eligible
13) TOTAL	6,099	12,709	391	1,978	81,505	6,409	14,015	14,191	65,049	84,947		Statewide

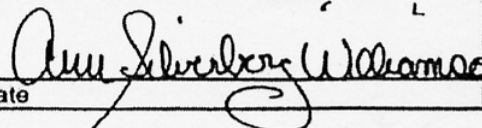
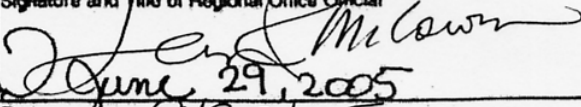
States Only, Indian Tribes are not required to include information on these programs.
Other Federal Programs: Medicaid; SSI; SSA; VA; Child Care Block Grant; Children's Justice Act; Community Based Family Resource

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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 2006, October 1, 2005 through September 30, 2006**

1. State or ITO: Louisiana 3. Address: DSS - Office of Community Services P. O. Box 3318 Baton Rouge, LA 70821	2. EIN: 1-72-600-0800-A1 4. Submission: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Revision
5. Estimated Title IV-B, Subpart 1 Funds	\$6,099,429
6. Total Estimated Title IV-B Subpart 2 Funds (This amount should equal the sum of lines a-f.)	\$12,709,000
(a) Total Family Preservation Services	\$2,859,525
(b) Total Family Support Services	\$2,859,525
(c) Total Time-Limited Family Reunification Services	\$2,859,525
(d) Total Adoption Promotion and Support Services	\$2,859,525
(e) Total for Other Service Related Activities (e.g. planning)	\$0
(f) Total Administration (not to exceed 10% of estimated allotment)	\$1,270,900
7. Re-allocation 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 \$1,270,000	
8. Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), Basic State Grant (no State match required)	
Estimate BSG Amount \$391,000 plus additional allocation, as available.	
9. Estimated Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) funds.	\$1,493,944
10. Estimated Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Funds.	\$440,000
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 \$149,394 for ETV \$44,000	
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	Signature and Title of Regional Office Official
	
Date	Date
June 29, 2005	9/30/05

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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 of the 2005-2009 Child and Family Services Plan. I have reviewed and approve the 2005 Annual Progress and Services Report submitted herein.

Date: June 22, 2005

Certified by Anne J. Williams

Title Secretary

Agency: Dept. of Social Services