

# MDHS



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

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## DIVISION OF FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES



**CFSP 2010-2014 Final Report**

**Submitted June 27, 2014**

**<http://www.mdhs.state.ms.us/links.html>**

# 2010-2014 CFSP Final Report

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Note: Separate attachments: Financial Documentation  
FY 2014 Funding-Revised-CFS-101 Budget Request  
FY 2015 Budget Request-CFS-101, Parts I and II  
FY 2012 Title IV-B Expenditure Report-CFS-101- Part III  
Training Course Forms

## I. ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

Under the umbrella of the Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS), the Division of Family and Children's Services is the agency authorized by state statute to promulgate regulations, policies and procedures necessary to implement the state's child welfare system and to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being for Mississippi's families and children. The DFCS is responsible for the Title IV-B Subpart 1 (Child Welfare Services), IV-B Subpart 2 (Promoting Safe and Stable Families), Title IV-E (Foster Care and Adoption Assistance), Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) and Educational Training Voucher (ETV).

Mississippi's Division of Family and Children's Services (DFCS) state-administered child welfare system is administered at the local level by 84 county offices through thirteen Regional Directors. A central strength to this system lies in the flexibility afforded each region to determine how best to meet the needs of children and families. The Regional Directors take an active part in the operations of the county offices within their region. Each Regional Director has a Regional Area Social Work Supervisor (ASWS) who assists with the day-to-day operations and frees the Regional Director to deal with the major issues within the regions. Each region also has a Resource Area Social Work Supervisor to supervise and monitor the licensure and adoption workers of DFCS' services on a regional basis. Each region and other service providers, such as contractors and community-based organizations, provide a wide variety of services to children and families. These services include programs designed to strengthen families, reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect, and support and preserve families.

### **Vision, Mission and Principles**

#### **A. DFCS Vision Statement**

DFCS' vision is that children grow up in families, safe from harm, without fear of constant disruption and that they have the opportunity to experience continuity of relationships. We have a vision of children having stability and of having a sense of belonging. Further, DFCS' vision is that no child under our "watch" continue to experience abuse or neglect and that families change for the better as a result of our intervention.

#### **B. DFCS Mission Statement**

DFCS' mission is to lead Mississippi in protecting children and youth from abuse, neglect and exploitation by providing services to promote safe and stable families.

In addition to the Mission and Principles, a renewed focus has been placed on Family Centered Practice. Family Centered Practice requires the entire system of care seek to engage the family system in helping improve the family's ability to safely parent their children. The Mississippi Department of Human Services, Division of Family and Children's Services, has identified six values that will be honored in working with clients, community partners and each other:

- **Competence:** We have technical skills and knowledge; we work with common sense; we make informed decisions; and we follow through to achieve successful outcomes.

- Integrity: We are honest in our interactions; we are accountable for our actions; and we do the right thing.
- Responsibility: We do what we say we are going to do; we take initiative.
- Respect: We treat others with kindness, compassion, dignity, and honor differences of our clients and each other.
- Personal Courage: We are loyal to the Mission of DFCS; we advocate for our clients; we lead by example even when doing so carries risk.
- Collaboration: We make decisions for the common good; we share resources based on need; we work together effectively in teams; and work with a collective knowledge of all programs and services.

### **C. Organizational Structure**

DFCS entered a reorganization plan in cooperation with the Division of Human Resources and the Mississippi State Personnel Board in 2011-2012, creating positions filled by personnel with a vast amount of knowledge and experience in the social service field, finance and legal fields, and additional reorganization to meet the needs of DFCS:

- Deputy Administrator of Family and Children's Services
- Director of Family and Children's Services
- Director of Field Operations
- Bureau Director of Performance Quality and Improvement
- Bureau Director of Finance
- Bureau Director of Administration
- Bureau Director of Child Welfare Professional Development
- Bureau Director of Resource Development
- Bureau Director of Permanency
- Bureau Director of Prevention/Protection
- Bureau Director of Policy
- Council of Accreditation Coordinator

Currently, the Deputy Administrator oversees the entire operations of DFCS with emphasis on the Council of Accreditation, Professional Development Services, DFCS Policy Services, Communications, the Modified Settlement Agreement (MSA) and Administrative Support.

In January 2012, Richard A. Berry became the Executive Director of MDHS. Kim Shackelford is the Deputy Administrator of the Division of Family and Children's Services. Mike Gallarno is the Director of Family and Children's Services.

DFCS field operations are divided into thirteen Regions designated as follows (see Map):

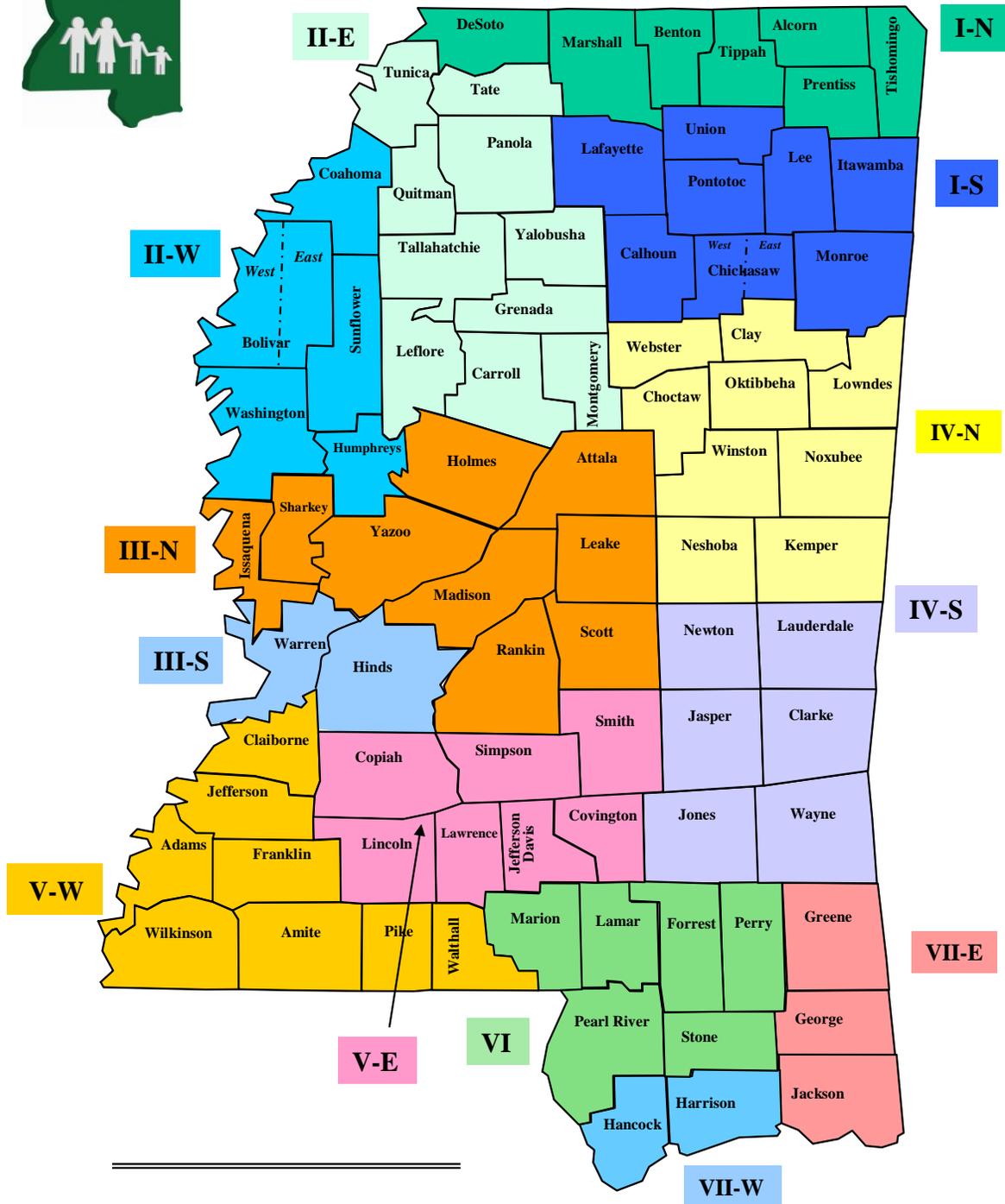
- Region 1 North
- Region 1 South
- Region 2 East
- Region 2 West
- Region 3 North
- Region 3 South

- Region 4 North
- Region 4 South
- Region 5 East
- Region 5 West
- Region 6
- Region 7 East
- Region 7 West

**D. Thirteen Regions Map**



# Mississippi Department of Human Services Division of Family and Children's Services



### **E. Child and Families Services Plan (CFSP) Progress**

DFCS continues to hire qualified social workers and supervisors to better serve the children of Mississippi as well as to meet specific lawsuit Settlement requirements regarding acceptable workloads and number of persons a supervisor can supervise. Additional PINs have been provided by the Mississippi Legislature, as well as additional funding of those positions. As of 2013, DFCS became fully staffed in most of the counties, including the Coastal Counties and the largest metropolitan County, Hinds.

Since the current CFSP will expire in 2014, a 5-Year Strategic Planning Conference was held February 12, 2013, with approximately 125 stakeholders and DFCS Senior Management attending. Track-One involved workgroups which developed the basis of the next 5-Year Strategic Plan with goals and action plans. Track-Two involved stakeholders who are required to respond to Requests for Proposals to be awarded a performance-based contract in order to provide emergency shelters, regular group homes or therapeutic homes for children in care. The 2015-2019 Plan will continue to be developed with the assistance of stakeholders through various stakeholder meetings, i.e. Regional Implementation Team Meetings, Citizens Review Panels, Service Provider Contractors meetings and trainings, as well as other collaborations to develop additional resources in the State to meet the needs of the children in care.

DFCS implemented several additional case review practices following the May 2010 Child and Family Services Review (CFSR), which uniquely prepare staff to not only learn what the Child and Family Services Review will involve when scheduled, but assists the staff in learning how to prepare case records which include all the documents and documentation reviewers will expect to find. The Foster Care Review of every child's case at six month intervals is one of the reviews. A second review is conducted by the Continuous Quality Improvement Unit at regular intervals outlined by the Mississippi Child Welfare Practice Model. A third review is conducted by the federal Court Monitor for the *Olivia Y.* Modified Settlement Agreement and Reform Plan (MSA) and includes participation from DFCS staff. A fourth type of review has been implemented in the Regions, peer-to-peer reviews, which is instructive for the staff.

### **F. Mississippi Settlement Agreement and Reform Plan**

*Olivia Y.* was filed in March 2004 in the United States District Court for the Southern District of Mississippi, Jackson, Division, against the Governor of Mississippi, the Executive Director of the Department of Human Services, and the Director of the MDHS, Division of Family and Children's Services, all in their official capacities. This case alleged that Mississippi's foster care system was failing to adequately protect children in its custody and provide necessary services in violation of their federal constitutional rights. This lawsuit sought only court-ordered changes in the system; money damages were never at issue.

Settlement was reached on January 4, 2008, and "Period 1" of the Settlement commenced on this date. Period 2 commenced on May 4, 2009.

On October 5, 2010, the Plaintiffs filed a Motion for Contempt. This Motion was denied by the Court on May 17, 2011, at which point the parties were directed to negotiate modifications to the existing settlement.

In July 2012, all *Olivia Y.* parties entered into a Modified Settlement Agreement (MSA), which superseded the initial Settlement Agreement and Reform Plan. The filing of the MSA constituted the start of Implementation Period 3 (a one-year period). The parties will negotiate an implementation plan for each following year until substantial compliance with the MSA requirements is reached. DFCS' progress is monitored by a federal Court Monitor and by the United States District Court, Southern District of the State of Mississippi, through quarterly telephonic hearings and biannual in-court hearings.

The objectives of Implementation Period 3 were numerous, specific and far-reaching, for example: development and implementation of strategies to improve the agency's relationship with the youth courts; hiring of more trainers and practice coaches; extensive policy revisions; completion of additional permanency roundtables; and establishment of a unit to monitor all maltreatment-in-care investigations.

Implementation Period 4 commenced on July 7, 2013. Priority requirements for this period include: recruitment and retention of caseworkers and supervisors; improved reporting on data indicators; improved timeliness and quality of investigations of abuse or neglect in which foster children are the alleged victims; and meeting MSA standards for timely case planning and children's contacts with their parents and siblings while in out-of-home placements. The complete text of the Modified Settlement Agreement and yearly implementation plans is available at: <http://www.mdhs.state.ms.us/olivia-y-lawsuit/>.

## **II. DESCRIPTION OF THE STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES CHILD WELFARE SERVICES**

### **A. Foster Care Services and Kinship Care Goals from Child and Family Services Plan**

#### Goals:

- To provide a safe environment for the well-being of foster children;
- To maintain a positive connection between children and their families and communities;
- To achieve permanent plans for children in a timely manner; and
- To empower kinship homes to provide safe and appropriate care for children.

#### Progress on Established Goals:

- Policy related to the licensure of relative and non-relative resource homes was revised and released.
- Diligent Recruitment grant activities rolled out in Regions IV-N, V-W, I-N and IV-S. Regional recruitment teams were established in each region, training was provided, and written plans approved.
- Permanency Competency curriculum was trained in seven Practice Model regions, and added to the list of ongoing trainings offered by the DFCS Professional Development Unit.
- State Office adoption staff retrained Resource Supervisors and Resource Adoption Staff on the Adoption Competency Curriculum.

- The Foster Care Unit was created in State Office and staff hired to monitor and track expedited and unlicensed relative placements. A protocol and a report were developed to help state office staff, regional directors and resource supervisors with this task.
- The state was not successful in securing grant funding to implement the Kinship Navigator program.
- Gary Mallon, from National Resource Center for Permanency and Family Connections provided Training and Technical Assistance to Mississippi regarding the development and implementation of a Kinship Care program.
- Mississippi PATH, resource parent curriculum, was revised and released. Expanded and new topics include characteristics of successful resource parents, shared parenting, grief and loss, trauma informed care, cultural diversity, medications, and discipline.
- A workgroup made up of DFCS employees and private agency staff was established to evaluate available pre-service curriculum to determine if another training program might better meet the state's needs.

#### Adoption and Foster Care Analysis Reporting System (AFCARS)

For FFY 2013, (October 1, 2012 - September 30, 2013) the State again failed AFCARS Foster Care element #57 (date of discharge transaction date/timeliness). In 2013, this failure continues to be assessed and steps to improve have been determined.

#### Termination of Parental Rights (TPR)

During FFY 2013, (October 1, 2012 - September 30, 2013) there were 480 individual TPR requests sent to the Attorney General's Office and 379 TPR judgments finalized by the Attorney General's Office. Judgments often include sibling groups.

### **B. Therapeutic Services for Children**

Therapeutic providers are dually licensed by DFCS and the Mississippi Department of Mental Health (MDMH). Therapeutic services provide specialized care for children who need more structure and intervention than a resource home can provide. A referral for therapeutic services must include a psychological evaluation of the child that recommends a therapeutic setting. Placement is intended to be time-limited and treatment-focused to help the child transition to a less restrictive setting in the community.

Therapeutic services include: individual, family and group counseling, recreational therapy, educational services, medical and psychiatric services, transitional living and life skills training for older youth, family focused reunification services and a closely supervised, structured residence.

DFCS and the Division of Medicaid (DOM) continue to collaborate around mutual areas of interest. DOM's waiver program, MYPAC, provides intensive in-home services to children at imminent risk of placement in an acute treatment facility. MYPAC serves a number of children in foster care. DFCS continues to work with MYPAC to help more foster children access MYPAC services by DFCS staff in order to keep foster children out of acute care.

The cases of children who require even more intensive services and acute care are presented to the State Level Case Review Board, a collaboration of the Department of Mental Health, the

Division of Medicaid, the Department of Education, and the Department of Human Services, for recommendations for treatment and/or placement. Coordinated by the Department of Mental Health, the Review Board meets monthly to review the child's history and current status. Effort is made to involve the parents in the meeting. If parents are unable to attend, they can participate via telephone. Bringing together the expertise and resources of four major state agencies in this way improves services for children and families.

#### **C. Harden House Adoption/Foster Care Program**

DFCS continues to collaborate with Harden House and other private agencies to provide foster care and adoption services. More detailed information about these efforts and the agencies involved is provided on page 22.

#### **D. Licensure**

The state office licensure staff is responsible for licensing and monitoring residential child care agencies as well as child-placing agencies in the state. New licensure standards went into effect July 1, 2012.

The DFCS Licensure Unit continues to perform licensure investigations following Abuse/Neglect/Exploitation (ANE) investigations in group homes, therapeutic group home or therapeutic resource homes. Additional licensure staff has been requested to assist with this function.

The DFCS Licensure Unit develops and revises licensure standards for Residential Child Caring and Child Placing Agencies. As of September 30, 2013, there were twenty-eight (28) Licensed Child-Placing Agencies which includes twenty (20) adoption agencies, six (6) agencies that provide therapeutic foster homes and two (2) agencies that provide regular foster homes. There were sixty-one (61) Residential Child-Caring facilities, which includes Two (2) maternity home and eight (8) shelters, twenty-five (25) therapeutic group homes, and twenty-six (26) regular group homes. In FFY 2013, a total of thirteen (13) agencies closed: ten (10) group homes, two (2) shelter, and one (1) Regular foster Home. Three (3) Residential Child Caring Agency was closed due to non-compliance with licensure standards.

In FFY 2013 a total of three (3) agencies opened: one (1) maternity home and two (2) regular group homes.

In FFY 2013, there were 297 therapeutic foster homes that are licensed to foster and/or adopt. Approximately fifty-eight (58) therapeutic foster homes were closed.

#### **E. The Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children**

The Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) is a contract among all fifty states, the District of Columbia and the US Virgin Islands. The Compact authorizes states to work together to ensure that children who are placed across state lines for foster care, adoption and residential placements receive adequate protection and support services. The ICPC establishes procedures for the placement of children and secures responsibility for agencies and individuals involved in placing children. The Compact is an important tool for ensuring safety, permanency and wellbeing for children with potential caregivers who do not reside in the same state. The Deputy Compact Administrator and Alternate provide technical assistance and consultation

pertaining to ICPC. This program provides an array of services which includes case management, assessments, training and data collection.

**Update on Previous Goals:**

The ICPC Unit continues to work with other states and agencies to facilitate timely placements for waiting children. The Safe and Timely Interstate Placement of Foster Children Act of 2006 (P.L. 109-239) encourages timely home studies. A home study is considered timely when completed within 60 days after the state receives, from another state, a request to conduct a study for the purpose of assessing the safety and suitability of placing a child.

After the public law was enacted, it became evident that the FCS Division's Mississippi Automated Child Welfare Information System (MACWIS) did not have the capability to track and capture data to address compliance with the 2006 Act. Therefore, ICPC created data collection through Excel Spreadsheets and used file ticklers to manage timeliness of home study completion. The ICPC Unit has made strides in meeting the 60 day deadline with the help of following; Live Scan to provide results of criminal background checks for home studies and Department of Family and Children Services Connection (DFCS Connection) which provides quick access to county staff for ICPC policy, forms, checklist and updates. The unit processes referrals electronically for faster processing. The State is creating a new SACWIS system that will track and set ticklers, and send notices for ICPC cases.

The ICPC Unit made some progress with previous goal of establishing an ICPC liaison as a point of contact in each region to track ICPC cases. Three of the thirteen regions, I-N, II-W and VII-W, established an ICPC liaison to provide direct contact regarding the distribution, tracking and monitoring of ICPC cases. These regions are showing performance improvement in meeting the 60-day timeframe for home studies. The ICPC Unit will continue to work on this goal until all regions have a liaison.

The ICPC Unit collaboration with the Court Improvement Program has improved procedures to resolve barriers of moving children into permanency. This partnership has helped limit the number of illegal placements across state lines through education and training of judges. The judges are being trained on a national level through the Association of Administrators of the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children annual conference and offered training at the local level when requested.

During FFY 2013, there were 2,426 ICPC cases handled either for placement of children from other states into Mississippi or placement of Mississippi children in other states with relatives. This number includes closures, approvals, Regulation 7 Priority Placements (expedited referrals that must be completed in 20 workdays), disruptions and residential treatment facility placements. During FFY 2013, 741 ICPC adoption cases were handled. There were 168 international adoptions processed for adoptive purposes from October 1, 2012 through December 30, 2012. As of January 1, 2013, DFCS no longer processes requests for international adoptions. During FFY 2013, ICPC processed a total of 3167 cases.

## **F. Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry**

DFCS Central Registry staff conduct child abuse and neglect background check requests made on behalf of DFCS employees, prospective employees and volunteers. Child abuse/neglect background check requests are also received from the following agencies and organizations: Big Brothers Big Sisters Programs; Boys and Girls Clubs; Mentoring Programs; YMCA; Child Care Facilities; Day Care Centers; Church Ministries; Mother's Day Out; Economic Assistance/TANF; Early Childhood Care & Development; Oakley Training School; Community Human Resources; Community Action Agencies; Mississippi Foster and Adoption Agencies; Out-of-State and Abroad Foster and Adoption Agencies; Head Start/Friends of Children Programs; Health Care Facilities; Nursing Homes; Hospitals; Medical Centers; Rehabilitation Centers; Mental Health and Mental Retardation Centers; Police and Sheriff's Departments; Residential and Group Homes; Mississippi School Districts; Out of State School Districts; Youth Courts; Non-Violence Shelters; Child Abuse Prevention Centers; Assisted Family Emergency Centers; Youth Challenge; Navy Construction Battalion Centers; Adult Day Care Centers and other out-of-state agencies.

Federal Fiscal Year October 1, 2012 to September 30, 2013 totals for each provider are as follows:

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| Boys and Girls Clubs                     | 613          |
| Child care Facilities                    | 7,742        |
| Unlicensed Child Care/ECC&D/ EA/TANF     | 227          |
| Community Action/Human Resource Agencies | 491          |
| Mississippi Foster/Adoption Agencies     | 2,047        |
| Out-of-State Foster Adoption Agencies    | 4,234        |
| Head Start Centers                       | 574          |
| Health Care Facilities                   | 2,467        |
| Rehabilitation/Mental Health Facilities  | 7,366        |
| Police/Sheriff's Departments             | 68           |
| Residential/Group Home Facilities        | 1,150        |
| Mississippi School Districts             | 17,000       |
| Out-of-State School Districts            | 169          |
| Youth Courts                             | 418          |
| National Guard Youth Challenge Program   | 1,243        |
| Other Agencies                           | 191          |
| Adult Day Care                           | 5            |
| Returns (problem applications)           | 1,023        |
| Mississippi Department of Human Services | 7,278        |
| Total                                    | <hr/> 52,308 |

Federal Fiscal Year October 1, 2012 to September 30, 2013 other programs areas in the Protection Unit logged the following service totals:

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Historical Background Checks                  | 469 |
| Protective Service Alerts Sent to Mississippi | 41  |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Protective Service Alerts Sent from Mississippi           | 02 |
| Perpetrators Identified from MS Central Registry checks   | 30 |
| Administrative Fair Hearings Requests Sent To AG's Office | 31 |
| Number of Names Removed From Central Registry             | 7  |

The Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006 was signed into law on July 27, 2006. In compliance with the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006, the Mississippi Central Registry program introduced the newly developed "Common Application" to request Central Registry background checks. The common application template includes all the necessary information and authorizations needed to process background checks through the Mississippi Automated Child Welfare System (MACWIS) Central Registry. The official notice of change giving instructions on the use of the new form is enclosed with each application request for Central Registry background checks as they are received from requestors.

The common application is for use by in-state and out-of-state, private and public providers of child-placing and child-caring facilities. The common application is also used for all other entities that provide child specific services. All agencies including child-caring and child-placing agencies are requested to use the common application form in its entirety by recreating the template format to their agency's official letterhead.

All foster and adoption agencies, excluding state foster and adoption agencies are required to submit a copy of their current child-placing license that documents their status as an official child-placing agency. All agencies are also responsible for providing a self-addressed, postage-paid envelope bearing the same postage required to mail the central registry request(s) so that the results can be mailed back when processed.

### **G. Fingerprint Program**

The Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006 (P.L. 109-248), section 471 (a) (20) was amended to require States to institute revised procedures for conducting criminal background checks of foster and adoptive parent and new procedures for child abuse and neglect registry checks of prospective foster and adoptive parents and adult members of their household.

Since FY 2008, criminal history checks have been conducted through fingerprinting as mandated by Adam Walsh Act of 2006 and Section 43-15-6 of the Mississippi Code via Live Scan Systems purchased from L-1 Identity Solutions, a Live Scan System provider. The electronic fingerprint Live Scan Systems are designed for ease of use and for capturing high quality fingerprint images, helping to ensure superior acceptance rates and accurate criminal history information.

The fingerprints are checked against the following databases:

- Mississippi Department of Public Safety (MDPS)
- Mississippi Criminal Information System (MCIC)
- Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
- National Criminal Information System (NCIC)

DFCS has purchased 63 Live Scan Systems and they are stationed statewide. Live Scan Systems stationed statewide support DFCS Regional Resource Units as it relates to licensing Foster and Adoptive Resource Families, DFCS Personnel and the ICPC Unit with ensuring safety and well-being of children. DFCS's Live Scan Systems conduct fingerprint-based background checks on all new employees, relative resource homes, resource homes, adoptive homes, ICPC placements, volunteers and anyone residing in the respective homes who is fourteen (14) years of age and older, including anyone that provides services and is entrusted with the care of children.

Additionally, the Live Scan Services (fingerprint-based checks) have been extended to Child Placing Contracted Providers via Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The MOU is offered to Contracted Providers along with the Licensure Standards and Regulations for Contract Providers. Once the MOU is signed, DFCS will offer live scan services to the Contracted Provider's employees, volunteers, prospective foster/adopt resource parents and anyone who is in the household that is 14 years of age or older. DFCS defrays the fees for fingerprinting submissions in lieu of private providers having to shoulder these fees for their respective Foster and Adopt Resource Families.

From October 1, 2012 to September 30, 2013, approximately 7,451 Criminal History Background Checks have been processed. The breakdown by category is as follows:

- Resource Home: 3,031
- Relative Resource Home: 2,690
- ICPC Placement: 218
- Adoption: 374
- Youth in Care: 73
- Interns 171
- Volunteers: 64
- Employees: 166
- Potential New Hires: 345
- New Hires: 93
- Youth In Resource Home: 226

Of the number of applicants fingerprinted, approximately 2,695 applicants received Criminal History Results, which included information that was suspect to working or volunteering with DFCS.

### **III. DESCRIPTION OF PROMOTING SAFE AND STABLE FAMILIES SERVICES**

#### **A. Comprehensive Family Support Services Program (CFSSP) (Formally Family Preservation Services (FPS))**

Beginning in FFY 2011, the Family Preservation Program (FPS) was renamed to provide both Family Preservation Services and Family Reunification Services. The Comprehensive Family Support Services Program (CFSSP) delivers an array of comprehensive, intensive treatment and wrap-around services to children and families in the service caseload of the DFCS. Service

delivery is primarily in the family home setting or other locations based on the identified needs of the children and families.

During FFY 2009 thru FFY 2010, Family Preservation and Time-Limited Reunification Services provided in Mississippi were contracted with two agencies, Mississippi Children's Home Society (MCHS) and Youth Villages (YV). The services were available statewide to a total of 350 families. Family Preservation Services were offered to families with a child under the age of 19 that was at imminent risk of being removed from the home setting for placement in a standard or more restrictive foster care placement. The services were intensive and comprehensive and were delivered in the family's own home. The Time-Limited Reunification Services were available to families with children who have been out of the home for a period of no more than 90 days.

### **Year 2011-Present**

#### Changes, Progress and Updates

The CFSSP Program provides short-term (4 to 8 weeks) intensive in-home services to serve as an alternative to the unnecessary placement of children in out-of-home care (Family Preservation). It provides intensive in-home services (12 to 16 weeks) that may include preparation, supervised visitation, transitional and reunification services to promote timely reunification for children who have been removed from their homes (Family Reunification). Mississippi Children's Home Services (MCHS), the Provider of this service offers family support services to further strengthen and support the families served through both Family Preservation and Family Reunification

CFSSP offers Reunification Services for families with children who have not been out of the home longer than 8 months. The goal is to promote timely reunification for children who have been removed from their homes. The service provides intensive in-home services for 12 to 16 weeks that may include preparation, supervised visitation, transitional and reunification services. The outcomes for the program are that annually at least eighty percent of the identified children in the Reunification cases at the time of discharge, where the child was actually placed back in the home (by the court or MDHS) during services, remain safely maintained with family, preventing the child/children from re-entering foster care.

The primary goals are two-fold: 1) Serve as an alternative to the unnecessary placement of children in out of home care; and 2) Promote timely reunification for children who have been removed from their homes. Families whose children are at imminent risk of placement or children who have been recently removed and placed outside of their home should receive these services. CFSSP provides Family Preservation and Reunification services that are accessible, effective and culturally appropriate. These services build on existing strengths and identify individualized needs of the client and families. Services will be family-driven and youth-guided, planned around the availability and schedule of the family, and will primarily be provided in the home.

Each team, which includes a Therapist and Case Manager, has a caseload of no more than six (6) cases. Based on these caseloads, these teams were available to could serve in FFY 2011 up to

eighty-four (84) cases, and beginning in the FFY 2012, up to ninety-six (96) cases statewide on any given day. The number of cases served by MCHS is dependent on the cases referred from DFCS and assigned to MCHS.

The primary criteria for a referral to the CFSSP is a family where the child(ren) or youth served by MDHS are at imminent risk for removal from the home for a placement in a standard or more restrictive foster care placement, Family Preservation, or the child(ren) must have been removed from their home for a period up to six months but not to exceed eight months, with the goal of timely reunification, (Family Reunification).

### Assessments

Assessments utilized for the FPS and CFSSP remained with the specific North Carolina Family Assessment Scale (NCFAS) throughout the FFYs 2010-2014.

Other Assessments were added as needed, and beginning in FFY 2010, additional assessments were completed with the family based on identified needs during the first 2 weeks of service and as needed during the remainder of the service period. Each team is provided multiple and various instruments available for more in depth assessments based on individualized needs of the family. Assessments include, but are not limited to: Safety Checklist, CASA Family Assessment, Child Behavioral Checklist, Child Adolescent Family Assessment Scale (CAFAS), Depression Scale for Children, Measures of Change including outcome rating scale and session rating scales; Multidimensional Anger Inventory, and Beck Scales for Suicide, Hopelessness, Anxiety and Depression. Measures of Change including outcome rating scale and session rating scales is no longer an option, but expected to be implemented in standard daily practice.

Surveys are completed at intake and discharge, as the client is provided a survey to rate the referral process (intake) and service delivery (discharge). These surveys will be delivered by a team member or mailed to the client. There will be a self-addressed stamped envelope that is addressed to the MDHS State Program Coordinator for that region. The client will be asked to fill out the survey and mail the survey at their convenience or the worker may take the sealed survey and mail on the client's behalf. These surveys are confidential, anonymous, and voluntary. In addition, a worker survey is provided for DFCS county staff to rate the overall satisfaction with the CFSSP services at discharge. These surveys may be mailed directly to the CFSSP State Program Coordinator for that region.

### Outcome Goals

#### Preservation:

Annually, at least eighty percent of the identified children in the Family Preservation cases at the time of discharge, will have been safely maintained in the same home as the referral or with a family member/relative; therefore, preventing the child/children from entering the MDHS foster care system.

Reunification:

Annually, at least eighty percent of the identified children in the Reunification cases at the time of discharge, where the child was actually placed back in the home (by the court or MDHS) during services, will have been safely maintained with family, preventing the child/children from re-entering foster care.

NCFAS Scores, Preservation:

Annually, aggregate NCFAS scores for family preservation cases will reflect improvement in the five areas of family functioning: Environmental, Parental Capabilities, Family Interactions, Family Safety, and Child Well-being.

NCFAS Scores, Reunification:

Annually, aggregate NCFAS scores for reunification cases will reflect improvement in the five areas of family functioning including the additional areas of Caregiver/Child Ambivalence and Readiness for Reunification.

Family Surveys:

Based on the Family Surveys at discharge, eighty percent of families served will indicate satisfaction with Family Preservation or Reunification services.

**Family Support Services**

Beginning October 1, 2011, MCHS also provided family support services through the CFSSP. The services provided under this component have been brief counseling and parenting as well as resource linkage.

Data on Families 10/1/12-9/30/13:

Family Preservation Families Admitted = 313  
Family Reunification Families Admitted = 182  
Total Families Admitted = 495

Family Preservation Children Admitted = 879  
Family Reunification Children Admitted = 458  
Total Children Admitted = 1,337

**B. Adoption Services**

Resource workers and their supervisors in each of the state's thirteen (13) regions are responsible for the recruitment, pre-service training, in-service training and licensing of resource homes. They are also responsible for preparing children for adoption, matching children with their adoptive families and supervising the placement.

During FFY 2013, the Adoption Unit placed 346 children into adoptive homes. There were 427 children in the custody of the Department who were freed for adoption with a plan of adoption effective September 2013. In FFY 2013, there were 2,612 children receiving adoption assistance benefits, 1,577 receiving IV-E/Federal funded benefits and 1035 CWS/State funded benefits.

During FFY 2013, New Adoption Specialist Training was added to the State of Mississippi Training Academy's contract. The Academy developed their own curriculum, using training from a number of other entities. The Adoption Unit continued presenting Adoption Competency Curriculum (ACC) to new Adoption Specialists throughout FY 2013, but the Training Academy will begin presenting their new Adoption Specialist Training no later than Spring 2014.

As a direct result of the ACC training, the Adoption Specialists now complete Comprehensive Child Assessments for every child being adopted. The basic information for this assessment is pulled from the Comprehensive Family Assessments being completed by the foster care workers. The Adoption Specialists then gather all additional information during the preparation and assessment for adoption of each child.

The Competent Permanency Planning curriculum was developed during FFY 2011. This training continued to be delivered quarterly during FY 2013 as an ongoing training with continuing educational hours for all DFCS staff.

The recruitment, training and licensing requirements for foster and adoptive parents are the same because many foster parents adopt their foster children. When foster parents choose to adopt, an adoption addendum which addresses child-specific adoption issues is added to the initial resource home study which was completed by a Licensure Specialist. Families who want to adopt only are licensed as resource families, but are not required to foster children prior to TPR. The Adoption Specialist completes the initial adoption home studies for these families, then matches and supervises children placed in those homes through the finalization of the adoption.

In September 2010, Mississippi was awarded one of seven discretionary grants for the Diligent Recruitment of Families for Children in the Foster Care System by the Children's Bureau. This grant is awarded as a cooperative agreement between the Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF), the Children's Bureau (CB), and the Mississippi Department of Human Services.

Mississippi is using these grant funds to develop and implement a diligent recruitment program to identify, prepare, and support resource families for children in the state's foster care system. Activities are focused on locating families who will serve as foster and adoptive families for children who are the most difficult to place:

- Large sibling groups;
- Sexually abused children;;
- Children who act out sexually or are sexually active;
- Pregnant girls who plan to keep the baby in the foster home;
- Children with severe behavioral problems;
- Teenagers of both genders; and
- Children with physical (including medically fragile), emotional or intellectual challenges.

The diligent recruitment initiative has been linked to major reforms in the State that include implementing a new practice model, a Continuous Quality Improvement Plan and policy revisions.

In addition to the targeted recruitment being conducted as part of the diligent recruitment initiative, the adoption specialists have been taught to mine the cases of youth who are free for adoption in order to find relatives and other individuals who can be re-connected to the youth. Some of these re-connections have developed into permanent families for the youth.

A teen-focused adoption recruiter was added to the adoption unit in FFY 2011. This recruiter, as well as 2 Wendy's Wonderful Kids recruiter works individually with 7-9 youth at a time. The teen-focused recruiter is assigned youth who are resistant to adoption in order to engage them in their permanent plan and seek a permanent family. During FFY 2013, 7 of the 12 youth assigned to this recruiter resulted in finalized adoptions.

DFCS also teams with other child placing agencies in the Adoption Consortium. The Adoption Consortium is a group representing all licensed child-placing agencies in the state. It meets semi-monthly at a different host agency to discuss issues of mutual concern. The Consortium produces collaborative adoption events, including recruitment efforts for waiting children.

Adopting families are given information about adoption assistance, which may include monthly financial assistance, continued Medicaid coverage for the child, payment of attorney's fees, and a one-time adoption incentive payment.

Families are also informed of post-adoption services, including support groups, respite care and intensive in-home services to prevent disruptions. Post-adoption services are provided through a contract with Southern Christian Services, Inc.

#### Adoption Goals from Child and Family Services Plan:

- Ensure a sufficient number of available adoptive families for children awaiting adoption.
- Provide Pre-Adoption Services to prepare children, birth parents and prospective adoptive parents for adoption.
- Identify adoptive families who can meet the needs of waiting children and facilitate timely placements.
- Provide Post-Adoption Services to promote child and adult well-being and family functioning and stability.
- Implement a Teen Adoption Initiative in order to provide permanent adoptive placements for older special needs children in state custody.

#### Progress on Established Goals:

- In FFY 2013, 346 adoptions were finalized.
- Protocol for Regional and State-Level Placement Committee Meetings has been revised based on the Adoption Competency Curriculum. State level Placement Committee Meetings are held twice per year in March and September. Each region has developed a schedule for monthly regional placement committee meetings as well as multi-regional quarterly meetings. Comprehensive Child Assessments are provided to all placement committee members prior to the meeting so each has an opportunity to review current home studies in order to be prepared to present families for the children needing placement.
- The Teen-Focused Recruiter facilitated finalized adoptions of 7 youth who had been

resistant to adoption.

- Hosted an Adoption Celebration Picnic in conjunction with various community partners including Southern Christian Services for Children & Youth/Harden House and Youth Villages. The event held in November at the Agriculture Center/Museum was attended by approximately 480 people.

#### **IV. COLLABORATIONS/INITIATIVES**

##### **Collaborations**

###### **A. Mississippi Statewide System of Care**

Collaboration continues with other agencies through State FY 2012 Interagency Memorandum of Agreement between the Division of Medicaid.

###### **Mississippi Interagency Coordinating Council for Children and Youth (ICCCY)**

DFCS participates in the Mississippi Interagency Coordinating Council for Children and Youth (ICCCY) and the Interagency Systems of Care Council (ISOC). The ICCCY is authorized by 2012 legislation and is comprised of the Executive leaders of the state agencies for Education, Human Services, Mental Health, Public Health, and Rehabilitation. The purpose of this legislation is to provide for the development, implementation and oversight of a coordinated interagency system of necessary services and care for children and youth, called the Mississippi Statewide System of Care, up to age twenty-one (21) with serious emotional/behavioral disorders including, but not limited to, conduct disorders, or mental illness who require services from multiple services and multiple programs system, i.e. prevention services to successfully provide services in their community. These services are child centered, family focused, family driven and youth guided, community based, culturally competent and shall provide for human rights protection and advocacy, nondiscrimination in access to services. It is a comprehensive array of services supported by best practices and/or evidence-based practices, individualized service planning that uses a strength-based, wraparound process, services in the least restrictive environment, family participation in all aspects of planning, service delivery and evaluation and integrated services with coordinated planning across child-serving agencies. The services include, but not limited to the following: comprehensive crisis and emergency response services; intensive case management; day treatment; alcohol and drug abuse group services for youth; individual, group and family therapy; respite services; supported employment services for youth; family education and support and family partners; youth development and support and youth partners; positive behavioral supports (PBIS) in schools; transition-age supported and independent living services; and vocational/technical education services for youth.

###### **B. Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP)**

The DFCS Resource Development Director serves on the Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) for the State Department of Education. Other members of SEAP include parents of children with disabilities (ages birth through 21); individuals with disabilities; teachers; representatives of institutions of higher education that prepare special education and related services personnel; State and local education officials, including officials who carry out activities under subtitle B of title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.); administrators of programs for children with disabilities; representatives of other State

agencies involved in the financing or delivery of related services to children with disabilities; representatives of private schools and public charter schools; not less than 1 representative of a vocational, community, or business organization concerned with the provision of transition services to children with disabilities; a representative from the State child welfare agency responsible for foster care; and representatives from the State juvenile and adult corrections agencies. The mission of the Special Education Advisory Panel is to promote the education of children and youth with disabilities. The panel provides advice and guidance to the Mississippi Department of Education, Office of Special Education, regarding the provision of education and related services of children and youth with disabilities in local educational agencies.

### **C. Arc of Mississippi**

The DFCS Prevention Unit Special Projects Officer who coordinates the Community Based Child Abuse and Prevention (CBCAP) Grant presently serves as an officer on the Board of Directors for the Arc of Mississippi. The Arc of Mississippi was founded in 1961 and is an affiliate of The Arc of the United States, the world's largest grassroots advocacy organization for citizens of all ages with cognitive, intellectual, and developmental disabilities, and their families. The Arc is a nationally recognized organization with 140,000 members who are affiliated through approximately 750 state and local chapters across the nation. The Arc of Mississippi works to include all children and adults with cognitive, intellectual, and developmental disabilities in every community. They focus on Abilities, Respect, Choice for all and encourage active citizenship and inclusion in every community. Other members of the Board of Directors include parents of children with disabilities, individuals with disabilities; representatives of other State agencies involved in the financing or delivery of related services to children and adults with disabilities and their families.

### **D. Collaboration with Adoption/Foster Care Program**

DFCS partners with a number of private child-placing agencies in order to better serve the children whose permanent plan includes adoption. There are 10 private agencies across Mississippi who are invited to participate in quarterly or bi-annual placement committee meetings throughout the state. These agencies all license resource homes, and some also provide adoption services through their agency. Some of the agencies license therapeutic foster homes and medically fragile foster homes for a specific population of the children in care. Though all agencies licensing resource homes do not provide adoption services, these agencies are encouraged to present their licensed resource families who may be interested in adoption to DFCS placement committees. If the family is matched with a child, then DFCS provides the adoption services to the family licensed by the private child-placing agency. The partnerships with these private agencies have been strengthened over the last couple of years as clear expectations and procedures have been established.

The following is a list of the private agencies and a brief explanation of the services each agency provides:

- Apelah  
Apelah provides support and instruction to resource parents from trained professionals. Staff is always available to answer questions and to respond immediately to any concerns of the resource parents or the foster child. Offers Coordinated care of children with

medical or emotional challenges, ongoing training, and 24-hour case management support.

- Sally Kate Winters

Sally Kate Winters Family Services offers a continuum of care for children within the foster care system that includes emergency placement services, assessment services, foster home placements, and respite services. Sally Kate Winters has also added a transitional living program to serve homeless and runaway youth.

- Methodist Children's Home (MCH)

Foster care homes serve as a haven for younger victims of abuse and neglect, as well as children who have special needs. MCH's Foster Care Program provides Therapeutic Foster Care homes, respite foster care, and campus-based, group care services. MCH provides complete, comprehensive training to all foster parents, as well as continuing support following placement of a foster child. DFCS staff is available at all times for consultation and support.

- MS Families for Kids

Adoption Program focuses on bringing permanency to of foster children and preparing families for parenthood through adoption so that it can be a positive experience. The children whom the adoption program specifically targets are those considered hard to place such as older children, those aging out of foster care, children with special needs, sibling groups, and those who have been abandoned, neglected or abused.

- Catholic Charities

Efforts are directed toward finding a family for any child in need of a home, regardless of special needs. Adoption Services are provided for those seeking to open their homes and hearts to adoptable children.

- Southern Christian Services/Harden House

SCSCY/Harden House offers a full range of services designed to meet the unique needs of adoptive and foster families. Services include parenting training, crisis intervention, case management, family support groups, information and referral, respite care, a lending library and newsletter, and a "warm line" that provides connections to support services.

- Mississippi Children's Home Services

Services include therapeutic foster care, residential treatment and adoption services for infants, as well as special needs children and youth. These and other services are community based and family-centered.

- Youth Villages

Youth Villages provides therapeutic foster care and transitional living services in Mississippi. Youth Villages also provides therapeutic services in Mississippi through Mississippi Youth Programs Around the Clock (MYPAC). Emergency and crisis response services are offered to youth and families referred to and participating in Youth Villages' services.

- 200 Million Flowers

Works diligently to create partnerships with parents to facilitate domestic, infant adoptions in Mississippi; conducts home studies; use media to influence public perception about adoption, foster care, family preservation, mentoring and the value of life; promote older children in DFCS custody for adoption; provide social services to adoptive parents, birthmothers and caregivers of children in crisis; and create mechanisms and partnerships for outreach to kids from hard places.

#### **E. Collaboration with Mississippi's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan**

Attachment to Emergency Support Function #6 of the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan was completed on March 27, 2009 and approved by the Administration for Children and Families Office of Refugees Resettlement (ACFORR).

#### **F. Collaboration between DFCS and the Mexican Consulate**

Collaboration through a Memorandum of Understanding was entered into on August 13, 2009 between DFCS and the Mexican Consulate for cooperation in providing services to children in the United States who are Mexican citizens.

#### **G. Collaboration between MDHS and the Division of Medicaid (DOM)**

Collaboration was achieved through an Interagency Agreement between MDHS and DOM, dated January 24, 2011 for Provision of Medical Assistance for Refugees in Mississippi.

#### **H. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU): Child Abuse on Keesler Air Force Base, Harrison and Jackson Counties**

A MOU agreeing that any suspected cases of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or neglect of children may, when feasible, be jointly investigated, monitored and resolved. This MOU became effective March 2010 and shall be renewed automatically for equal twelve-month periods, each and every year thereafter, unless any party gives written notice of intention not to renew prior to the expiration of the current effective period.

#### **I. DFCS Collaboration with DECCD**

The Division of Early Childhood Care and Development (DECCD) is within MDHS. DECCD is responsible for the administration of Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) which provides subsidized childcare certificates to eligible families. DECCD administers the Quality Rating and Improvement System for childcare providers as well as the Child Care Resource and Referral Network. Through CCDF the Division offers a variety of training and technical assistance to childcare programs. The training and technical assistance program is designed to evaluate the knowledge and a wide range of skills of child care professionals and offer continuing education to increase the ability and skills of the child care professional workforce. It further supports quality throughout Mississippi's child care system with a professional development that offers quality age-appropriate developmental activities in child care settings. DFCS collaborates with DECCD to provide child care certificates to families that are in need of child care to maintain

stability as a family unit. There is also a move toward collaboration on providing quality early childhood education as a means of child abuse prevention.

**J. Collaboration with stakeholders, agencies, courts, health care providers and others in the 2015-2019 Child and Family Services Plan**

In February, 2013, a Child and Family Services Plan (5-Year Strategic Planning) Conference was held with approximately 125 participants including stakeholders and DFCS Senior Management attending. Workgroups outlined the basis of the 5-Year Strategic Plan and goals were set.

**K. Collaboration with stakeholders, agencies, courts, health care providers and others in the Child and Family Services Review/Program Improvement Plan (PIP)**

The May 17-21, 2010, the CFSR was conducted on site in Hinds, DeSoto and Lauderdale Counties in Mississippi. As a result of the findings from the CFSR, DFCS developed a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) for the Areas Needing Improvement. The PIP was initiated in April, 2011. DFCS invited stakeholders who participated in the Child and Family Services Plan Workshop and the CFSR on-site reviews to continue to work with DFCS throughout the achievement of the PIP as well as invite other stakeholders to participate. The final data for the PIP was submitted March 25, 2014 and the Children's Bureau provided notice of acceptance on June 2, 2014.

**L. 200 Million Flowers**

200 Million Flowers is a non-profit, Christian organization seeking to connect children with families in Mississippi. One focus is on promoting children already in the overwhelmed state foster care system. 200 Million Flowers executed a no-charge service agreement with DFCS on August 29, 2013, to support and facilitate the adoption of these children. A second focus is crisis pregnancies and adoption. In Mississippi, over 5,000 teenagers give birth each year, which as a percentage is the highest rate in the country. Part of the mission is to help create a paradigm shift for those facing crisis pregnancies so adoption is considered a viable, loving choice. Poorly equipped and unprepared parenting perpetuates family poverty and further burdens the state's foster care, social services, and welfare systems. These brave girls are identified and recruited by the organization that then provides counseling, educational support, and medical services, regardless of whether they choose parenting or an adoption plan. 200 Million Flowers qualifies would-be adoptive parents, educates the public about the global orphan crisis at home and abroad and provides outreach to different partners.

**M. Collaboration with the Courts and the Tribe**

Collaboration with the Courts: 2010-2014

Significant collaboration with the Youth Courts and the Mississippi Supreme Court occurred from October 2010 through May 2014. Five Judges were contacted and agreed to participate in the Child and Family Services Review May 17-21, 2010 in Hinds County, DeSoto County and Lauderdale County.

## Update on Goals for FFY 2010-2014

### Goal 1: Training for the Judiciary, Tribe and DFCS Staff

**Progress:** In collaboration with the Administrative Office of Courts/Court Improvement Program, Phase I, DFCS staff and Youth Court judges assisted in the development of DFCS' Advanced Professional Development for Youth Court Practice curriculum and videos. The curriculum was professionally printed, videos were professionally produced, and trained in all Regions. This training continues in 2014 and provides an overview of the Courts in Mississippi, how to prepare cases for trial, conduct in the courtroom setting and includes a mock trial with judges and attorneys assisting. Curriculum for Phase II of the Court Improvement Project includes Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC), Title IV-E Eligibility and the Uniform Rules of Youth Court Practice (URYCP). Videos for the curricula include local judges as well as professional actors. The videos from the ICPC curriculum were presented at the 2010 National ICPC conference and were well received, with several states requesting copies of the videos. Curriculum for Phase III of the Court Improvement Project was developed, which includes Disproportionality and Engagement of Fathers/Diligent Searches. Two professional videos were created for this training material. Training of all direct service staff occurred between September and December 2010. Both of these curricula continue to be available to new hires in 2014. The modules, videos, and other training materials are also available on the Mississippi Supreme Court's website at:

[https://courts.ms.gov/trialcourts/youthcourt/youthcourt\\_vcvideos.html](https://courts.ms.gov/trialcourts/youthcourt/youthcourt_vcvideos.html)

#### Youth Court Process for Abuse/Neglect & Delinquency Cases

The videos listed below are videos that display information about the Youth Court process. These videos can be viewed by parents and youth, enabling them to understand the rights and responsibilities of the youth court system in the State of Mississippi.

- [Courtroom Etiquette/Hearings Information](#)
- [Abuse & Neglect Cases Process](#)
- [Delinquency Cases Process](#)

#### DFCS Advanced Professional Development for Court Procedures

The videos listed below are the result of the ongoing collaboration of the Court Improvement Work Group, which is comprised of employees of the Division of Family and Children's Services (DFCS) and the Administrative Office of Courts/Court Improvement Program (AOC/CIP). These training videos are primarily used for the purpose of establishing and familiarizing social workers, as well as other agency professionals with the courtroom protocol and expectations of the judicial system. Additionally, these videos identify principles of Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC), explain the importance of IV-E Funding eligibility, and the construction of the Rules and the weigh each section holds.

#### Volume 1

- [Introduction](#)
- ["Dress for Success" What to Wear in the Courtroom](#)
- [Virtual Tour of the Courtroom](#)
- [Professional Conduct in the Courtroom](#)
- [Basic Courtroom Etiquette](#)
- [Mistakes to Avoid](#)
- [Presenting Yourself in Court](#)
- [The Judge and You](#)
- [Good Practices](#)

#### Volume 2

- [Preparing for Cross-Examination](#)
- [Cross-Examination: Some Basic Tips](#)
- [Rapid Fire Questions](#)
- [\(Not So\) Friendly Questions](#)
- [Never "Off the Record"](#)
- [Yes or No "Answers"](#)
- [Conclusion](#)

#### Volume 3

- [Introduction I](#)
- [Introduction II](#)
- [Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children](#)
- [Title IV-E](#)
- [Uniform Rules of Youth Court Practice](#)

#### Volume 4

- [Introduction](#)
- ["Bias and Lunch"](#)
- ["One Father's Story"](#)

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#### Collaboration with Administrative Office of Courts to Provide Training to the Judiciary

Representatives from DFCS presented at the Judges/Referees Conferences or Symposiums in 2010-2014 regarding the MSA, COA requirements, CFSR and Uniform Rules of Youth Court Practice. Through the Administrative Office of Courts/Court Improvement Program, a former Youth Court Judge and current Director of Department of Child Services for the State of Indiana, James W. Payne, was the keynote speaker at the September 17, 2010 Judges and Referee Conference. The title of the Plenary Session was, "*How to Do More with Less: Making Reasonable Efforts in an Unreasonable Economy*". He discussed Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR) and ways of improving the safety, permanency and well-being of all children under the age of eighteen (18).

The goal for Phase Three projecting a Summit Conference with judges, guardians *ad litem*, prosecutors and court administrators was revised to utilize mandatory conferences sponsored by The Mississippi Judicial College, which are annual events that will reach the maximum number of judiciary. DFCS collaborated with the Administrative Office of Courts to bring Judge Darlene Byrne as the keynote speaker for the Annual Youth Court Judges and Referees Conference September 14-16, 2011, to address Engaging Families and Diligent Search. Youth Court Judge Michael Key was the keynote speaker for September 2012 Annual Youth Court Judges and Referees' Conference. Judge Stephen Rubin is scheduled to speak at the September 2014 Conference.

#### Collaboration through Cross-Training Judiciary, Tribe and DFCS Staff

Cross-training took place with DFCS Profession Development regarding Quality Visits in January 2010; and at the Permanency Summit in November 2010 (Casey Family Programs-

Permanency Roundtable). In Phase III (2011) of the Court Improvement Program project, focus was on cross training with judges, the Tribe and DFCS staff: cross-training occurred in February 2011 at the Comprehensive Approaches to Sex Offender Management (CASOM) Conference in Choctaw, MS.

#### Collaboration in 2011-2014 Regarding the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)

The Annual ICWA Conference was developed in 2010 with the First Annual ICWA Conference held in 2011, the Second Annual ICWA Conference held in 2012, the Third Annual ICWA Conference held in 2013, and the Fourth Annual ICWA Conference is scheduled for August 14, 2014. (See Section VI. Tribal Consultation for information on attendees, goals and achievements of the ICWA Conferences.)

The video trailer referenced is the culmination of the ongoing collaboration between the Mississippi Courts, Child Welfare Agency, the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, and various National Resource Centers which specifically focus their expertise on educating non-tribal entities on the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) and other issues related to Native American values. The video trailer was developed by the Mississippi Administrative Office of Courts/Court Improvement Program in consultation with the National Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues and the National Resource Center for Tribes as an ICWA educational resource for judges, courts, child welfare, and judicial educators. The video was produced by Mad Genius, Inc., Ridgeland, Mississippi.

- [Video Trailer](#)
- [ICWA Video](#)

[https://courts.ms.gov/trialcourts/youthcourt/youthcourt\\_vcvideos.html](https://courts.ms.gov/trialcourts/youthcourt/youthcourt_vcvideos.html)

#### **Goal 2: Uniform Rules**

**Progress:** The Supreme Court Order amending the Mississippi Uniform Rules of Youth Court Practice was signed on July 30, 2012 by George C. Carlson, Jr., Presiding Justice, to include ICWA requirements under Rule 7. The Amended Rules are available on the Mississippi Supreme Court website. DFCS participated in drafting the Uniform Rules for Youth Court and continues to make recommendations for revisions as needed in 2014. A task force was created with representatives from Division of Family and Children's Services, Youth Services, Department of Health, Department of Mental Health, Medicare, Department of Education, four Youth Court Judges, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court and two representatives from the Judicial College. A smaller committee of judges and attorneys review and approve revisions as requested by task force stakeholders. (See The Mississippi Supreme Court website under Rules for the text of the Uniform Rules for Youth Court Practice [www.mssc.state.ms.us](http://www.mssc.state.ms.us) ).

**Goal 3: Greater Collaboration between Agency Executives/Decision Makers**

**Progress:** In 2010, Associate Justice of the Mississippi Supreme Court, Randy Pierce, was appointed to create a Court Improvement Program Commission with emphasis on courts and agencies cooperating to affect better outcomes for children. Specifically, Justice Pierce promoted better collaboration between DFCS, Youth Services and the Department of Education. The Deputy Administrator of DFCS served on the committee. The Commission's term expired in 2013, but it is anticipated that new appointments will be made.

**Goal 4: Increase Number of Children Eligible for Title IV-E Funds**

**Progress:** In 2010, one hundred letters were sent to Judges and Referees regarding the specific language required in orders for a child to be eligible for Title IV-E funding. Seventeen invitations to meet with judges, guardians *ad litem*, prosecutors, court administrators and county attorneys were received. The judges and referees agreed to revise their orders, use the uniform orders or use MYCIDS orders to facilitate eligibility for each child entitled to receive the funds.

**Goal 5: Develop Information Sharing between the Courts and DFCS**

**Progress:** Collaboration with The Mississippi Supreme Court, Administrative Office of Court on Mississippi Youth Court Information Delivery System (MYCIDS)

MYCIDS Data File Exchange – Phase I: The Mississippi Administration of Courts began implementing a statewide automated system, MYCIDS, to house information on children who fall under the jurisdiction of the Youth Court. In the beginning, DFCS elected to have this interface with the Youth Court system. DFCS was originally unable to complete the interface because MYCIDS was not functional. However, as of June 2013, all counties in Mississippi have access to MYCIDS. 83 out of 84 counties are in some stage of implementing MYCIDS, including either comprehensive use, training, receiving equipment or just getting started. One county has a different system and elected to continue with the same program. DFCS is in the final assessment phase for a new SACWIS system to include capability to share information with MYCIDS.

**Goal 6: Timely Termination of Parental Rights when Adoption is the Permanent Plan**

**Progress:** In May 2011, DFCS Court Improvement Workgroup members attended the Courts and Agency Conference in Arlington, Virginia to outline the goals for 2012-2013 regarding timely filing of termination of parental rights (TPR) petitions, notice of hearings and finalization of termination of parental rights timely when the permanent plan is adoption. In 2014, the DFCS Court Improvement Workgroup reviews reports from the Permanency Unit, from Foster Care Review and the Attorney General's Office regarding overdue TPR packets, overdue hearings and multiple continuances. The Attorney General's Office works with DFCS to determine the cause of multiple continuances and expedite hearings on those TPRs.

## **Goal 7: Provide Judiciary with Data Specific to the County**

**Progress:** The Court Improvement Group organized “Legal Stakeholders for Permanency for Children” summits for the first seven Practice Model Regions. These summits took place from October 2011 through April 2012. Summits for the remaining Regions began in the spring of 2013. Invitees include all of the Region’s Youth Court Judges, Referees and Prosecutor’s, Chancellors, Youth Court personnel, Guardians *ad litem*, Regional DFCS staff, ASWS’s and front line staff.

The meetings were comprised of a keynote speaker, Judge Michael Key, who spoke about permanency for children, an update on Practice Model implementation for that particular region, and a close look at data for that region. During the breakout sessions, each county reviewed its own data and identified three areas needing improvement in that county. Each county developed strategies to improve the three areas identified. These strategies were incorporated into the Regional Implementation Plan of the Practice Model, with stakeholders in attendance invited to become part of the Practice Model Regional Implementation Team.

### **Goals for 2015-2019:**

- Collaboration between the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, the Choctaw Model Youth Court and the Attorney General’s Office at Choctaw to produce Annual Indian Child Welfare Act Conferences
- Collaboration with the Administrative Office of Courts to implement the Mississippi Youth Court Information Delivery System (MYCIDS) program for DFCS and Court information systems interface.
- Collaboration in conjunction with the Mississippi Child Welfare Practice Model, Legal Stakeholders for Permanency for Children. Follow up meetings are scheduled for October 27-31, 2014 in four strategic areas across the State. These conferences will bring judges, guardians *ad litem*, prosecutors, law enforcement, service providers and court administrators to the table to establish goals for better permanency outcomes for children.
- Collaboration with the Uniform Rules of Youth Court Practice (URYCP) Task Force to revise and update rules as needed. The URYCP are located on the Mississippi Supreme Court website. Uniform youth court forms for orders and other documents are approved and hyperlinked to the Uniform Youth Court Rules of Practice. A request has been made to include standard orders for Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children in the next revision of the Rules. The Rules are located at:  
[http://courts.ms.gov/rules/msrulesofcourt/uniform\\_rules\\_yc\\_practice.pdf](http://courts.ms.gov/rules/msrulesofcourt/uniform_rules_yc_practice.pdf)
- Collaboration with The Mississippi Supreme Court to promote use of uniform forms and orders, which are also available in MYCIDS, for more efficient orders and other documents use by the courts and DFCS.

### **Initiatives**

#### **A. Accreditation in Mississippi**

The MSA requires the Foster Care Services of DFCS to become accredited by the Council on Accreditation (COA). Accreditation is designed to be a framework within which the

organization can measure a variety of its achievements, ensure quality improvement of services across the state, and assure the safety, permanency, and well-being of all Mississippi's children.

DFCS began the accreditation process in 2009 with the formation of work groups to review each standard to determine what changes were needed in order to meet the standards. Deliverables were developed to send COA at defined intervals to show what was being done to change policy and practice to come into compliance with the standards. About this same time, the Child Welfare Practice Model was introduced in the state. This helped to reinforce the practice needed in order to meet the COA Standards.

The Self Study phase of the accreditation process began in February 2010, and was completed in December 2012, with the submission of the final edition of the Self Study to COA. The Self Study was the work of numerous staff in state office, representing all sections of DFCS. Simultaneously while preparing the self-study, the agency prepared for the accreditation site visits by participating in mock site visits, facility checks, and case reviews. The agency used the data collected on the visits and reviews to set-up corrective actions for identified problems.

Site Visits began at the State Office in February, 2013, and have progressed through the Regions in the same order as the Mississippi Child Welfare Practice Model ("Practice Model") rollout. Following each site visit, COA issues a Pre-Commission Report explaining the deficiencies cited during the site visit and outlining the evidence the region must submit to show the region has corrected the deficiencies. After the Commission reviews the response, a Post Commission Report is issued. The region responds to this report with further documentation about compliance with specific standards. No region has been able to achieve accreditation due to the Division's need to develop policy and procedure for validating driving records of employees and resource parents, updating or replacing the MACWIS system, requiring supervisors to have advanced degrees, some facility issues, and some practice issues. The policy on validation of driving records is expected to be implemented in August 2014. The MACWIS system is receiving upgrades in equipment in every county office and the entire system will be replaced in 2017. All newly hired supervisors are required to have an advanced degree or be in school working toward an advanced degree. Facility issues are being addressed with the assistance of another division and practice issues are being addressed through training, coaching and supervision.

Remedial site visits are being planned for selected regions in the coming year with additional training on the COA Standards prior to each site visit.

#### **B. Mississippi Child Welfare Practice Model**

One objective for the 2010-2014 Child and Family Services Plan was to implement a child welfare practice model statewide that would guide the State's work with children and families according to the DFCS's mission and values and the guiding principles of the CFSR. Other specific objectives in the plan included the following:

1. By September 30, 2009, the contractor, in collaboration with DFCS and key stakeholders, will complete the development of the practice model. The completed model will identify

the activities associated with each component that relate to the settlement agreement, COA standards, and the CFSR.

2. The completed practice model will include a plan for statewide implementation of the practice model, including identifying the systemic supports, such as training, policy, monitoring, and resource development that need to be addressed to assure the successful implementation of the model.

The overall goal of implementing the practice model, along with the other objectives listed above have been achieved, although there is continuing work to be done to fully institutionalize the practice model statewide and achieve the anticipated results of such a large initiative. A summary of activities associated with each objective listed above is described below:

**Objective 1:** In developing the practice model, the State's contractor, the Center for the Support of Families (CSF) conducted an assessment of practice in the State, including case reviews, stakeholder interviews, multiple focus groups, and analysis of data. This occurred in the spring of 2009. The assessment yielded important information about child welfare practices in the State and the status of outcomes for children and families.

Part of the assessment also included examining the various mandates with which the State was attempting to comply, e.g., Federal Child and Family Service Review measures, MSA requirements, COA standards, and so forth. Based on information in the assessment, the State decided to frame its many mandates within a model of child welfare practice that staff and providers in the field could easily understand, adapt to, and incorporate into their interventions with children and families. The State recognized that staff and providers in the field, who are ultimately responsible for meeting the requirements, needed a conceptual framework that is value-based and principle-driven that they could rely on to guide their work with children and families on a daily basis, and that such a framework would help staff and providers understand the reasons and values behind their interventions as opposed to being more compliance-driven in order to simply meet the terms of the current legal mandates before the State. The values and principles that provided the foundation for the practice model were the DFCS child welfare mission statement and principles and the CFSR guiding principles which include family-centered practice, community-based services, individualized services, and strengthening parental capacity to care for their children.

Based on this analysis, and the guiding principles noted above, DFCS and CSF developed six broad components of child welfare interventions that comprised the core of the practice model, which included the following:

- Mobilizing appropriate services timely
- Safety assurance and risk management
- Involving children and parents in decision making
- Strengths and needs assessments
- Preserving connections and relationships, and
- Individualized case planning

Core requirements/standards/performance indicators of the MSA, the CFSR, and COA are incorporated into the six components of the practice model. Practice guides were developed for each of the six components to guide social workers in the activities comprising each component of the practice model, when to carry out the activities, and how to carry them out. Also, during the implementation process, additional practice guides were developed to support some of the more specific activities within the six components, such as conducting family team meetings and addressing educational needs of children.

**Objective 2:** An implementation plan was developed for the rollout of the practice model that is rooted in the principles of implementation science. More specifically, a phased implementation plan including a planning phase, an initial implementation phase, and a full implementation phase was planned for each of the State's 13 Regions. Also, a teaming structure for guiding the implementation process was established at the statewide and regional levels. The phased implementation process is described under Objective 3, but other relevant parts of the implementation plan are described below.

The implementation teaming process that was established includes a State Implementation Team, comprised of executive level staff at the State Office, whose function is to direct and monitor implementation activities statewide. There are multiple State sub-teams whose functions include addressing implementation issues related to policy, training, resource development, finance, data and information systems, continuous quality improvement, legal and judicial issues, and diligent recruitment of foster and adoptive families. Each implementing Region also has developed a Regional Implementation Team to direct implementation activities locally. To date, the regional teams have met with varying levels of success and continued work is needed to strengthen the roles of the teams. Each Regional Implementation Team is required to have a CQI sub-team and a diligent recruitment sub-team (where the Federal diligent recruitment grant is being implemented).

Implementation activities include training all supervisors and social workers on each component of the practice model. To achieve this, CSF developed training modules for each of the six components of the practice model and works with DHS practice coaches to deliver the training to staff. DHS has now incorporated the practice model training into the pre-service training that all new social workers must complete prior to being assigned a caseload.

Training is followed by individual and group coaching of staff and supervisors by CSF and DHS practice coaches during the initial and full implementation periods. This facilitates the transfer of learning process from the classroom training to practice with children and families. In addition to individual coaching, CSF has also developed a series of group coaching labs that are delivered to staff in implementing Regions to reinforce certain aspects of the practice model.

The implementation plan also incorporated the rollout of the Department's CQI process and aligned its rollout with the rollout of the practice model so that the two processes reinforce and complement each other. The CQI reviews are structured according to the six components of the practice model and help implementing Regions to understand their conformity with the principles and practices of the practice model. The CQI Unit conducts a baseline review of each Region as it begins the implementation process and follow-up reviews at annual intervals.

**Objective 3:** As projected in the 2010-2014 CFSP, DHS adopted a phased implementation approach to implementing the practice model. The rollout schedule is shown below:

| Regions                              | Implementation Phase Dates         |  |   |                                 |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|---|---------------------------------|
|                                      | Planning<br>(6 months)             | Initial<br>Implementation<br>(One Year)    | Full/Ongoing<br>Implementation<br>(One Year)* | Data Tracking<br>(One Year)     |
| I-South, II-<br>West                 | January-June<br>2010               | July 2010 – June<br>2011                   | Approx. Sept. 2011<br>– August 2012           | September 2012<br>– August 2013 |
| V-West                               | July-December<br>2010              | January -<br>December 2011                 | Approx. March<br>2012 – February<br>2013      | March 2013 –<br>February 2014   |
| IV-North                             | July – December<br>2010            | January 2011 –<br>June 2012 (18<br>months) | Approx. Sept. 2012<br>– August 2013           | September 2013<br>– August 2014 |
| I-North, III-<br>South, IV-<br>South | January-June<br>2011               | July 2011 – June<br>2012                   | Approx. Sept. 2012<br>– August 2013           | September 2013<br>– August 2014 |
| V-East,                              | July-December<br>2011              | January –<br>December 2012                 | Approx. March<br>2013 – February<br>2014      | March 2014 –<br>February 2015   |
| III-North,<br>VII-East               | July 2011 – June<br>2012 (12 mos.) | July 2012 – June<br>2013                   | Approx. Sept. 2013<br>– August 2014           | September 2014<br>– August 2015 |
| II-East, VI,<br>VII-West             | July-December<br>2012              | January –<br>December 2013                 | Approx. March<br>2014 – February<br>2015      | March 2015 –<br>February 2016   |

\*The two-month period between the end of the Initial Implementation phase and the beginning of the Full Implementation phase is in place to permit the follow-up CQI review after the first 12 months of implementation and an opportunity to revise the Regional Implementation Plan based on preliminary results of the review going into the next phase of implementation.

Each Region has a six-month planning period at the beginning of the implementation process during which time, the Region completes an implementation plan, forms its Regional Implementation Team, and prepares for implementation. In two Regions (III-North and VII-East), the planning phase was extended for six months due to staffing shortages in the Regions that would have otherwise impeded implementation activities.

Following the planning phase, each Region has a 12-month initial implementation period during which supervisors and social workers are trained on the practice model and begin receiving

coaching in applying the model to their work with children and families. Following the initial implementation phase, the Region receives a follow-up CQI review and makes any needed adjustments to its implementation plan based on the results of the review. One Region (VI-North) had an extended initial implementation phase due to staffing concerns, and was delayed in beginning the full implementation period.

After initial implementation, each Region begins the full sustained implementation period during which coaching continues for all staff and the Region is expected to complete the implementation process. As of the end of FFY 2014, ten of the State's 13 Regions will have completed this phase.

Each Region has a year following completion of the full sustained implementation phase for data to be collected and evaluated for their progress in implementing the practice model. Currently, the court monitor for the MSA is evaluating the progress of the early implementing Regions. While we know that much work continues to be needed in order to demonstrate conformity with all aspects of the practice model, the progress of the early implementing Regions has been encouraging and positive. The final three Regions in the State will complete the full sustained implementation phase by March 2015.

### **C. Atlantic Coast Child Welfare Implementation Center (ACCWIC)**

The Atlantic Coast Child Welfare Implementation Center is one of five Centers established in 2008 by the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau. The ACCWIC works with child welfare agencies to implement strategies to achieve sustainable, systemic change that results in greater safety, permanency and well-being for children, youth and families.

DFCS entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the ACCWIC for a project term July 1, 2009-September 20, 2011 to provide technical assistance for the purpose of executing the Mississippi Change Management Implementation Project to develop the organizational capacity to plan, implement and sustain Mississippi's family centered Practice Model, the Mississippi Child Welfare Practice Model. ACCWIC conducted organizational and readiness assessments in Forest County and Harrison County to assess readiness for family centered practice. The ACCWIC provided coaching on best practices, foster systemic and lasting improvements, promote peer-to-peer learning and networking, create toolkits and develop resource manuals to document what works and under what conditions and ways, as well as design methodologies to develop findings that inform implementation and facilitate continuous quality practice.

In June 2010, ACCWIC was in the project installation phase:

- Teams were organized;
- Stakeholders were interviewed in April;
- The project was presented to DFCS Senior Management in May ;
- An assessment survey was conducted in mid-May;
- Training was conducted in June; and
- Learning labs follow in additional locations.

Additional assistance was requested and granted through June 2012, convening DFCS Senior Management planning meetings.

T/TA was completed timely in 2012 and a plan was implemented to sustain the progress made in the following areas:

- Regular Senior Management Meetings are being planned and convened as needed.
- The workforce assessment feedback developed by the University of Denver continues to be implemented.

#### **D. Mississippi Change Management Implementation Project**

The Change Management Implementation Project in Mississippi targeted and isolated two active, critical and high-profile counties in South Mississippi, Forrest and Harrison. The counties were affected significantly by Hurricane Katrina. Both have historically presented issues of differing natures and characteristics from each other, but unique in the State in not only the characteristics themselves, but in the long-standing nature of the characteristics. Such characteristics constitute major obstacles to the implementation of family-centered practice and the achievement of desirable outcomes for families and children. During year one of the Project, these counties became a case study for organizational analysis in Change Management Strategy and, in year two, a case study in effective implementation. All CFSR systemic factors were analyzed, assessed and addressed in both phases of the project – Statewide Information System, Case Review System, Quality Assurance, Training, Service Array, and Agency Responsiveness to the Community, Foster Parent Licensing, Recruitment and Retention. Organizational factors that were analyzed, assessed and addressed in addition to these CFSR systemic factors include recruitment, hiring and retention of staff; organizational structure; leadership, administration and supervision; and any other factors, taking nothing for granted, which influence effective practice. In terms of practice, all CFSR outcomes were considered in measuring improvement in the delivery of services through the implementation of the Practice Model with special emphasis, due to nature, principles and values of family-centered practice, being focused on Safety Outcome 2 – children being safely maintained in their homes when possible and appropriate; Permanency Outcome 1 – children having permanency and stability in their living situations; Permanency Outcome 2 – the preservation of the continuity of family relationships and connections for children; and Well-being Outcome 1 – the enhanced capacity of families to provide for their children’s needs.

The ultimate objective of the Change Management Implementation Project was not merely the implementation of the Family-Centered Practice approach in the target counties, but the institutionalization of a Family-Centered Practice culture within the organization throughout the State through the development of a strategy and model from the effort of organizational analysis and development undergone in the target area during the two year project. The Project provided the methodology and know-how to assure sustenance. The anticipation was for a landmark study, taking nothing for granted, considering all variables, which will provide a blueprint for success not only in implementation, but in institutionalization of effective child welfare practice, which consistently results in desirable outcomes for children and families.

T/TA was completed timely in 2012 and a plan was implemented to sustain the progress made with community partner groups in Forrest and Harrison County, which remain in place to implement the Mississippi Child Welfare Practice Model.

### **E. Casey Family Programs**

#### **Permanency Round Tables (PRTs)**

Casey Family Programs is working with the agency in implementing Permanency Round Tables (PRT) and will deliver Permanency Values Training and Permanency Skills Training to stakeholders and staff participating in the Permanency Roundtables. In addition to the formal training, staff of Casey Family Programs will be coaches to DFCS staff in the actual Permanency Round Table meetings.

DFCS staff were introduced to Permanency Round Tables by Casey Family Programs in November 2010, at a Permanency Summit held in Natchez, Mississippi.

From the Permanency Summit, a plan was developed to pilot the permanency round tables in two regions of the state – one in the Delta and one on the Coast. A criterion for the selection of cases for the PRTs was children who had been in care three or more years. The MACWIS ad hoc Report MWAH01 – Children in Custody 3 Years or More was used to develop the list of cases to be reviewed. In Region 2 West, 65 children were identified who met the criteria. After the cases were validated, 48 children were selected for the PRTs. The teams for the PRTs were selected from the field and state office and consisted of a Facilitator, Master Practitioner, Scribe and a Permanency Consultant from Casey who also acted to DFCS staff during the actual PRT meetings. DFCS staff chosen to participate was staff that expressed interest in learning more about the process and had demonstrated a commitment to permanency.

The PRTs for Region 2 West were held the week of May 23 – 27, 2011 in Greenville, MS. The first two days of the week were training sessions conducted by staff from Casey. The first day's training was "Permanency Values Training" and included stakeholders from the region, court personnel, the PRT team members and the workers who had cases to be presented at the PRTs. The second day of training was "Permanency Roundtable Skills Training" for the team members. The third through the fifth days were the actual PRTs. There were four Roundtable teams with three sessions per day. The sessions were two hours long for a single child and two and a half hours long for a sibling group. At the conclusion of each day, a debriefing was held for the team members to talk about common themes which had emerged during the sessions and any barriers to permanency identified during the roundtable sessions.

During each session, the worker and supervisor presented the case summary, the team asked clarifying questions, and together a plan was developed of tasks to be accomplished to help the child (ren) achieve permanency. Each of the tasks was assigned to particular members of the team. A Follow Up session was held in Region 2 West in August of 2011 to review the progress made in obtaining permanence for the children whose cases were reviewed in the May Permanency Round Tables. The teams who reviewed the cases in May were reassembled and each case was reviewed with an update on the Action Plans developed by the teams.

#### Update for May 2011-April 2012:

During the time period from May 1, 2011 to September 30, 2012, PRTs were completed for the following regions: II West, (May 2011), VII East, V West (both in October 2011) and I North, I South and II East (all in April 2012). In Region II West (counties Coahoma, East Bolivar, Humphreys, Washington, West Bolivar, and Sunflower) 49 children were round-tabled. In Region VII East (counties George, Greene and Jackson) 56 children were round-tabled. For Region V West (counties Adams, Amite, Claiborne, Franklin, Jefferson, Pike, Walthall and Wilkinson) 27 children were round-tabled. In April 2012, Regions I North (Alcorn, Benton, Desoto, Marshall, Prentiss, Tippah and Tishomingo) 25 children were roundtabled and for I South (counties Calhoun, East Chickasaw, Itawamba, Lafayette, Lee, Monroe, Pontotoc, Union, and West Chickasaw) 24 children were round-tabled. For II East (counties Carroll, Grenada, Leflore, Montgomery, Panola, Quitman, Tallahatchie, Tate, Tunica and Yalobusha) 34 children were round-tabled.

#### Update for October 2012-February 2014

During the period October 1, 2012 to February 2014, PRTs was completed for the following regions: V East and VI (October 2012), IV North and IV South (November 2012), III South (August 2013), III North (October 2013) and VII West (February 2014). In Regions V East (counties Copiah, Covington, Jefferson Davis, Lawrence, Lincoln, Simpson, and Smith) and VI (counties Forrest, Lamar, Marion, Pearl River, Perry, and Stone) 72 children were round-tabled. For November, Regions IV North (Choctaw, Clay, Kemper, Lowndes, Neshoba, Noxubee, Oktibbeha, Webster and Winston) and IV South (counties Jasper, Jones, Lauderdale, Newton and Wayne) 48 children were round-tabled. For III South (counties Hinds and Warren) 83 children were round-tabled. In Region III North (counties Attala, Holmes, Leake, Issaquena, Madison, Rankin, Scott, Sharkey and Yazoo) 65 children were round-tabled. For Region VII West (counties Hancock and Harrison) 32 children were round-tabled.

#### Progress

All thirteen regions have completed Round I of PRTs. Round II PRTs, which is focusing on children in custody 24 months or more, have begun and are expected to be completed by July 2015. Regions II East Round II PRTs was conducted May 2014 and II East was in June. The state office Foster Care Unit started tracking information to develop a data report that will summarize the progress of children who have been round-tabled up to this point. Follow-up is conducted regarding permanency status of children round-tabled. This information will be used in the data tool that will include demographic information as well as numbers for permanency status by regions and collectively. In addition, attention has been given to revising PRT forms to be Mississippi specific.

#### Goals:

The goal is to complete Round II PRTs in all thirteen regions by July 2015. Once all thirteen regions have completed the PRT process, Round III PRTs will begin with children who have been in custody for 12 months or more.

#### Other Initiatives with Casey Family Programs:

The Mississippi Department of Human Services, Mississippi Commission on Children's Justice, Foundation for the Mid-South, and Casey Family Programs organized an event titled "A

Community of Hope” to discuss new comprehensive approaches to improving the lives of children and families on May 10, 2012 at The Mississippi Children’s Museum. The goal is for the people of Mississippi to have a shared vision of a place where all children are safe and have the support they need from the adults in their lives to grow up healthy and succeed. This was an effort to engage the entire community to ensure families are strengthened so that every child can dream big and fulfill their potential. In 2013, the Jim Casey Foundation, in conjunction with the Kellogg Foundation, provided technical assistance regarding youth over 18 who are transitioning out of care. MDHS sees this project as a way to improve the public image of the department while accomplishing great things for children in care.

## V. PROGRAM SUPPORT

### A. Professional Development and Training Unit

The mission of the Professional Development Unit is to provide quality training to enhance the knowledge, skills and abilities of DFCS personnel and to prepare them to assume their responsibilities.

The Professional Development Unit had many exciting changes in the years between 2009-2014. The unit increased from training to professional development, and includes the Director of Workforce Development. The goals that were set were almost all achieved and if they were not achieved there was a definite reason and a change of direction that will be noted. Together these tasks and events have help to mold and create a solid Professional Development Unit for the agency.

#### Update on Goals:

Goal 1: Enhance the quality of training provided to DFCS staff

- Child Welfare Professional Development four week pre-service training sessions offered throughout the year in multiple regions

Child Welfare Professional Development was delivered through the regional plan until October 2012. Following the release of a Request for Proposal (RFP) in 2011, a contract with the University of Mississippi was executed to revise the 270 hour pre-service training for frontline staff and supervisors. Along with the development of curriculum through the contract, the University of Mississippi also employs trainers who deliver this training beginning approximately every 9 weeks. The pre-service training includes the principles of the new Mississippi Child Welfare Practice Model.

Pre-Service Training includes alternating weeks of classroom and on-the-job training beginning with one week of OJT prior to the first week in the classroom. The on-the-job training component is a solid component of the curriculum. Following four weeks of OJT and 4 weeks of classroom training, the final week the staff is trained on the functions of the MACWIS system. The training weeks include training on the following: What is the job of a child welfare professional? Engagement of Clients in assuring safety, permanence and well-being for children; Comprehensive Family Assessment; Case

Planning, Case Management and intervention; The on-going work; preserving and maintaining connections, mobilizing appropriate services in a timely manner, court, permanency, safety and well-being of children. This training on the quality, frequency, purpose and structure of meetings with foster children, parents, and foster care providers addresses communicating with, interviewing and observing foster children. The staff are also trained on engaging clients in assuring safety, permanency and well-being for children.

Pre-Service Training modules cover topics consistent with the Title IVE program. The curriculum is not designed to distinguish between foster care and child welfare populations. Instead, as permitted by the Children's Bureau, it recognizes that training needs to account for the "total child." This comprehensive approach allows the training program to cover the full range of activities, including those needed to meet Title IV-E maintenance and service requirements, without having to develop dual trainings – one for foster care and another for protection. The following offers a couple of examples taken from the Child Welfare Policy Manual, 8.1H.8, consistent with Mississippi's program:

- Social work practice, such as family centered practice and social work methods including interviewing and assessment.
- Cultural competency related to children and families.
- Child abuse and neglect issues, such as the impact of child abuse and neglect on a child.

New caseworkers do not carry a caseload during Pre-Service training. New caseworkers receive rigorous feedback on the work experience component of the training; further, the staff receives more intensive supervision during the on-the-job training period; and the trainees' performance will be closely monitored and assessed.

All of the pre-service training sessions and the clinical supervisory training sessions are held in the State Office in Jackson, MS. The classes are taught both in roundtable classroom style as well as in a computer lab for the computer training. Competency-based testing is performed weekly and a passing score of 70 must be achieved in two attempts to avoid recommendation for termination.

- Child Welfare Professional Development pre-service training curriculum updated as new policy is issued

As new policy is issued a notice is sent to all staff and information in training manuals is updated. A formal revision is completed by the University of Mississippi on Pre-Service and Clinical Supervisory Training annually to ensure that training is updated with the policy and practice of the agency.

- Forty-hour Pre-Service Training offered for newly hired/promoted front line supervisors

Through the contract signed with the University of Mississippi, a forty-hour Clinical Supervisory Training was also created for newly hired or promoted supervisors to attend

before receiving a caseload. Prior to the development of this training all supervisory staff completed supervisory training through the Mississippi State Personnel Board. This training is no longer required of DFCS staff as the newly revised training focuses specifically on supervision in a child welfare setting. Clinical Supervisory Training is delivered a minimum of four times per year. Competency-based tested in preformed at the end of the class and a passing score of 70 must be achieved in two attempts.

Following the completion of the classroom training, supervisors are assigned a mentor hired through the University of Mississippi. The supervisor and mentor go through the Level 1 Clinical Supervisory Training curriculum, which is a 24-week training that is designed for the supervisor and mentor to meet two hours weekly. The team works through a manual developed for new supervisors.

As part of the on-going training for supervisors Learning Labs were conducted in each region for direct service supervisors and regional directors. These labs were delivered through a contract with the University of Southern Mississippi and 5 labs were offered to each region annually.

The contract with the University of Southern Mississippi ended in 2012 and the agency shifted the work to the Center for the Support of Families (CSF) for development and implementation of Level 2 Clinical Supervisory Training. In the summer and early fall of 2013, this training was delivered to supervisors who had completed Level 1 training. Level 2 helps build the capacity of county supervisors to manage the work, lead change efforts in their counties and help their staff to perform consistently at high levels of quality work with children and families. The supervisory training is focused on improving the quality of supervision with the goal of improving upon the quality of work done in the field. The supervisors are presented with data regarding their counties that will speak to quality visits with children. Individual professional development plans are developed with supervisors regarding underlying conditions, barriers, and needs that result in unsuccessful visits. Coaches determine the skills that can be built by training and targeted specific coaching that will improve direct practice, including quality visits. Supervision is the link that needs to be enhanced that leads to quality visits.

DFCS continues to explore initiatives that will capitalize on training and tools which strategically improve the quality and quantity of face-to-face visits with children and their families, as well as, focusing on the recruitment and retention of caseworkers.

- On-going training sessions offered throughout the year for workers and supervisors

On-Going training sessions held during 2010-2011 included:

- Quality Visits training in partnership with the National Resource Center for Family Connections and Permanency Planning;
- Adoption Competency training conducted by staff from the National Resource Center on Adoption;
- Child Maltreatment training by staff from the Center for the Support of Families

- Maltreatment Investigations in Out-of-Home Placements conducted by staff from the Center for Support of Families;
- Secondary Traumatic Stress

The on-going training program was further developed as of May 2012. DFCS staff are required to complete 40 hours of ongoing training annually and supervisory staff are required to complete 24 hours. Training sessions have been developed by DFCS and through the partnership with the University of Mississippi, a train-the-trainer is delivered when new Training Coordinators are hired. This train-the-trainer session focuses on the aspects of adult learning as well as curriculum development.

On-Going Training sessions are delivered quarterly in three parts of the state: north, central and south. This allows for a diverse group of trainings to be offered. The topics trained through the development of this program are:

- Appropriate and Quality Documentation
- Substance Abuse in the Family
- Family Team Meeting and Group Facilitation
- Advanced Professional Development for Court Procedure
- Keeping it Safe
- ABCs of your Child's Education
- Where are the Dad's? Locating and Engaging Absent Fathers
- Putting the Puzzle Pieces Together – Lifebooks
- Childhood/Adolescent Mental Health Issues and the Child Welfare Professional
- Reunion – Stress Management
- Individualized Case Planning
- Teachable Moment: Knowing when to teach Parenting Skills
- Advanced Professional Development for Court Procedure: Disproportionality and the Six Steps to Find a Family: A Practice Guide to Family Search and Engagement
- Submitting TPR packets that will Stand up in Court
- Promoting Placement Stability and Permanency through Worker/Child Visits
- Permanency
- Introduction to Child Welfare 501
- Advanced Professional Development of Court Procedure: ICPC, IV-E, Uniform Rules of Youth Court Practice
- Expedited Placement Training
- Adoption Competency – Child Assessment and Preparation

Goal 2: Expand Training Unit Staff to support regionally based training plan

- Request PINs for 13 new Training Coordinators

The unit currently has 10 Training Coordinators who are located across the state. This represents an increase from three Training Coordinators that were employed at the beginning of the plan. Positions are available to hire nine additional coordinators across the state. The unit was restructured in 2010 and the Bureau Director was hired to report to the Director of Family and Children's Services. The Family Protection Training

Director and Director of Workforce Development, as well as a secretary principle and 3 special projects officers, report to the Bureau Director. The unit has grown dramatically over the course of the five years covered by this report and proven to be successful.

- Request PINs for 13 Training Specialists

This goal was not achieved as the direction of the unit changed, and these positions were no longer needed. Through the implementation of the practice model there are practice coaches who work within the region on practice specific issues.

- Addition of computer programmer to develop eLearning curriculum

This goal was not achieved as this focus of the unit changed.

- Addition of MACWIS technician

A MACWIS technician to report to the Professional Development Unit was determined unnecessary since the MACWIS unit functions under the direction of the MACWIS Director and all technical related issues are filtered through that unit.

- Addition of Program Specialist for clerical/book-keeping training

An additional Program Specialist position was created and filled to assist with clerical/bookkeeping related trainings. This training is held as needed across the state. The Clerical Manual was revised, which was a joint effort between the Professional Development Unit and the Finance Unit to ensure that accurate policy and practice is reflected in the manual used for training as well as for reference in the field. The addition of this position allows for more one-on-one work when needed in the field.

### Goal 3: Continue training initiatives and collaborative efforts

- Administrative Office of Courts;

In cooperation with the Mississippi Band of Choctaws Model Court, the Forrest County Model Court and the Court Improvement Project, the DFCS Court Improvement Workgroup developed and sponsored an Indian Child Welfare Act Conference for DFCS staff and court personnel. Assistance for the conference was provided by the National Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues, The National Resource Center for Tribes and The National Council for Juvenile and Family Court Judges.

In November and December 2009, training was delivered to direct service staff in each region on Advanced Professional Development of Court Proceedings, ICPC, IV-E eligibility and the new Uniform Youth Court Rules. In October and November of 2011, training was delivered to direct service staff in each region on Advanced Professional Development of Court Proceedings, ICPC, IV-E eligibility and the new Uniform Youth

Court Rules. With the restructure of the ongoing training program with DFCS, as of July 2013, the court trainings are all offered three times per quarter.

- Partner with Universities in coordinated activities for DFCS staff returning to school to pursue advanced social work degrees;

DFCS awarded contracts to Jackson State University, University of Mississippi and University of Southern Mississippi to provide necessary coursework for caseworkers and supervisors currently employed with DFCS to earn their Master's in Social Work (MSW). University partners support the mission and values of DFCS as reflected in the Child Welfare Practice Model implemented throughout various regions of the State. Each university has assembled cohorts for DFCS employees and classes are scheduled in conjunction with their work hours to include the agency's compressed work schedule. The MSW cohorts have been designed and implemented specifically for the non-traditional, child welfare employed MSW students. Students are required to complete 60 hours of coursework to earn their degree.

- University of Mississippi Medical Center Children's Justice Center; and Workshops and Conferences that we held during 2010-2011 included:
  - Investigating Child Physical Abuse – May 21, 2010 – Meridian
  - Investigating Child Sexual Abuse – June 11, 2010 – Meridian
  - Family Violence and Child Abuse – June 25, 2010 - McComb
- Continued funding to encourage staff enrollment in the Tuition Assistance program.

Additional funds were allocated by the state legislature to pay tuition for DFCS staff to pursue advanced degree in social work in exchange for a work commitment after award of degree. Over 110 staff have participated in the scholarship program. Students, including some who are not in the cohort, who achieve a grade point average of "B" or higher generally receive reimbursement for their tuition, fees and books. Students are required to complete their field placements within DFCS and commit to serving at the agency for up to three years after graduation. Those students who fail to complete up to three years with the agency after graduation may be required to repay reimbursements by the agency for tuition, fees and books.

## Workforce Information

### *Recruitment*

The recruitment of child welfare staff is a multi-pronged process in Mississippi. The State Personnel Board (SPB) acts as the requiring agent for Mississippi state agencies. SPB provides access for registered human resources personnel to an Excel spreadsheet that reflects each position, name of incumbent, salary and other limited information as of the close of business the prior business day. The DHS Human Resources Manager receives that spreadsheet every Friday to create a report. At this point all position titles other than Family Protection Specialists, Family Protection Workers, and Area Social Work Supervisors are eliminated. With this list the ability

to create a count function, sort by classification, sort by name, separate filled from vacant PINs, and calculate a total for each category takes place. The totals are then transferred to the chart contained in the Social Work Analysis weekly report. The report provides a snapshot of where the agency stands for recruitment and retention purposes.

When recruiting a new employee, the hiring manager completes the paperwork. When a properly signed request to fill a position (Form 218) is received in the Human Resources office, the paperwork is routed to executive management for approval. Once approved and returned to the HR office, the position is included on the next Promotional Opportunities announcement sent out to all MDHS employees. At the same time, an electronic request to advertise is sent to the State Personnel Board via the NeoGov applicant/announcement system. SPB then ensures that the job advertisement is posted on the SPB website as soon as approved.

During the 2010-2011 year, DFCS spent over \$15,000 to place employment advertisements in major newspapers in Mississippi and surrounding states. Advertisements were placed in the New Orleans Times-Picayune, The Mobile Press Register, The Memphis Commercial Appeal, The Meridian Star, The Biloxi Sun Herald, and The Jackson Clarion Ledger. A large display advertisement was purchased that included all Family Protection Specialist series positions, Family Protection Worker I, and Area Social Work Supervisor. Information was included in the advertisement about the 15% additional salary available in the carve-out counties (recruitment flexibility). This advertisement included information about the benefits available to employees of the MDHS as well as instructions about how to apply. An Equal Opportunity Employee statement is in the advertisement.

DFCS recognized the critical need to fill positions in the three coastal counties and Hinds County as there was a large number of vacant positions and a very high turnover rate of employees in those four counties. The Division of Human Resources along with DFCS management determined that efforts had been made through job fairs, media advertisements, and through the posting of openings with the State Personnel Board, but those efforts did not produced any measurable increase in employment in the four identified counties. MDHS management approved DFCS' proposal to request 15% recruitment flexibility for certain job classifications (see below) in those four counties, which was subsequently approved by the State Personnel Board. The recruitment flexibility allows DFCS to hire new employees at 15% above the starting salary for the job which they are hired. DFCS was also able to adjust current employee's pay in the affected job classifications as well as regional director positions in the affected four counties to no more than 15% over the starting salary for equity purposes. The award of the recruitment flexibility and resulting equity adjustments totaled more than \$500,000 annualized salary including fringe costs. The table of authorized recruitment flexibility is as follows:

| <b>Job Title</b>                     | <b>Starting Salary</b> | <b>Starting Salary w/ Recruitment Flex</b> |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|--|
| Family Protection Worker I           | \$23,643.58            | \$27,190.12                                |
| Family Protection Specialist         | \$27,615.55            | \$31,757.88                                |
| Family Protection Specialist, Senior | \$30,049.94            | \$34,557.43                                |

|  |             |             |
|--|-------------|-------------|
| Family Protection Specialist, Advanced | \$32,700.43 | \$37,605.49 |
| Area Social Work Supervisor            | \$37,511.76 | \$43,138.52 |

The qualifications and job titles for front line staff and supervisory staff are listed in the table below:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Family Protection Specialist           | Bachelor's degree in SW or LSW  |
| Family Protection Specialist, Sr.      | 2 years' experience and LSW   |
| Family Protection Specialist, Advanced | 4 years' experience and LSW   |
| Area Social Work Supervisor            | LMSW and 4 years' experience or LSW and must have completed 30 semester hours of graduate level SW education or LSW and 5 years' experience in SW |

One of the greatest issues affecting the workforce and overall success of DFCS is the ability to effectively recruit and hire qualified staff. In recent months, numerous activities have taken place to improve and increase staff recruitment. Representatives from the MDHS Human Resources Division and DFCS Director of Workforce Development have actively recruited for available positions within DFCS at numerous career fairs, employment expos, and professional conferences throughout the state. This includes agency participation in the Governor's Job Fair Network, a unique employment resource consisting of regionally-based career fairs for Mississippi residents and employers.

The agency currently advertises positions on various employment websites to attract potential candidates who may not otherwise check the State Personnel Board's website for job listings. These sites include indeed.com, simplyhired.com, and craigslist.com, and listings on these sites are managed by the DFCS Workforce Development and Personnel Units. Additionally, DFCS launched a collaborative effort with *Parents & Kids* magazine that includes the featuring of recruitment advertisements in their issues as part of a collaborative effort with the DFCS Prevention Unit. Issues of *Parents & Kids* are circulated in various areas throughout the state including Northeast MS, Central MS, and in the Pine Belt Region. The Director of Workforce Development will work to feature similar advertisements in newspapers and other local publications.

Through development of the Workforce Development Plan, time to hire was identified as a barrier to the recruitment of staff. To alleviate this issue, DFCS developed strategies for streamlining the hiring process and expediting personnel transactions. Examples of these strategies include the reorganization and expansion of the DFCS Personnel Unit, communication with Regional Director regarding the hiring process, and the identification of pending applications from perpetual SPB advertisements. It is the hope that targeted recruitment efforts, in combination with currently offered recruitment incentives and upgrades to the hiring process, will result in DFCS effectively recruiting qualified staff. Improvement occurred, with regard to

staffing in the Carve Out Counties and throughout Mississippi, with the implementation of these efforts.

### *Staff Retention*

According to the results of the 2011 DFCS Annual Retention & Worker Satisfaction Survey, the majority of agency staff report overall satisfaction with their jobs (70.9%), and feeling a sense of pride in the work that they do (90.1%). However, less than half (43%) reported feeling that their workload is manageable and allows them to do quality work with the families that they serve. Given that research indicates that child welfare caseworker turnover negatively impacts permanency outcomes for children, the agency worked to identify the causes of staff turnover throughout DFCS and to make improvements to retain staff.

The recruitment incentives mentioned in the section above were also offered to current staff working in the critical need counties of Hinds, Harrison, Hancock, and Jackson counties, respectively, in order to retain staff in these areas. Other initiatives were developed to improve the retention of quality staff, including the development of a multi-level Clinical Supervisory Training to support and strengthen agency supervision, improvements to physical work space, the use of Realistic Job Profiles as part of the pre-interview process and the development of a Youth Court Strategies plan to alleviate issues with judicial engagement in some areas. Providing recognition through the use of the agency newsletter, as well as through issuing state service pins and certificates are additional ways that the agency worked to improve employee morale and reduce avoidable staff turnover. By retaining qualified, well-trained direct service staff and supervisors, the agency is better equipped to provide services and improve outcomes for the families served.

### *Workforce Development Plan*

The Division of Family & Children's Services, through generous support from Casey Family Programs, obtained the services and support of the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) to develop a Workforce Development Plan to positively affect recruitment and retention of agency staff throughout Mississippi. The intention of the Workforce Development Plan is to address current and potential agency gaps (through data analysis, staff surveys, interviews, and focus groups) and strategize remedies to improve recruitment efforts, as well as increase staff capacity, efficacy, and retention throughout DFCS with the long-term goal of ultimately improving outcomes for Mississippi children and families.

The Workforce Development Plan was designed to accompany and support the implementation of the MSA and the Practice Model, and includes financial projections and staffing progress information. In addition to information regarding statewide improvement efforts, a section of the plan focuses on workforce issues in Hinds, Harrison, Hancock, and Jackson counties, identified in the MSA as "Carve Out Counties". These counties have historically had difficulty in recruiting and retaining quality staff for reasons believed to be county/region specific. In collaboration with APHSA, periodic workgroups were held to review assessment findings and develop strategies to address identified issues. The Workforce Development Plan creates an avenue to make recruitment and retention efforts meaningful and measurable, with the intention of improving employee effectiveness, client satisfaction, and the public's perception of MDHS-DFCS over time. A draft of the Carve Out section was submitted to the Court Monitor for review

in September 2012, and the agency continued preparation of the statewide plan for submission in December 2012.

#### *Education Liaison*

DFCS has a staff liaison between the universities and DFCS to promote collaboration in the supplying and training of social workers. The following activities were have been achieved through the reporting period:

- Scheduled and attended numerous Licensure Preparation Workshops;
- Attended several University of Southern Mississippi 360 Committee Meetings, which focused on DFCS employees enrolled in their MSW program;
- Participated in Career Fairs;
- Processed applications and reimbursement paperwork for the Professional Enhancement Scholarship (PE);
- Chair PE Scholarship Committee;
- Completed and submitted reports regarding licensure, PE Scholarship, etc.;
- Chaired the Worker Qualifications Workgroup;
- Participated in the Training and Supervision Workgroup;
- Member of the HR Workgroup;
- Provided material for the Child Welfare Professional Development (CWPD) Newsletters;
- Communicated professional workshop/conference information to DFCS personnel;
- Assisted with CWPD as a MACWIS Coach in March, 2011;
- Assisted in the development of DFCS employee recruitment postcards; and
- Developed recruitment notifications for Mississippi Colleges/Universities with accredited Social Work programs geared specifically for the coastal counties.

#### **B. Technical Assistance Requested and Received**

- The Court Improvement Program in collaboration with the DFCS Training Unit and the Court Improvement Work Group developed training on Advanced Professional Development for Court Procedures.
- The National Resource Center for Family Connections and Permanency Planning provided curriculum on “Quality Visits”, facilitator training and facilitator coaching for the reinforcement of the training statewide.
- The National Resource Center for Adoption provided training for the regional resource supervisors on three modules in their “Adoption Competency” training curriculum.
- The Center for the Support of Families developed training modules related to the six components of the Mississippi Practice Model. This material is being incorporated into the pre-service training for new workers.
- ACCWIC - Statewide Implementation of Family Centered Practice Model – Completed in 2012.
- Casey Family Programs – Permanency Roundtables

### **C. Prevention and Protection Unit**

The Prevention/Protection Unit within DFCS includes:

- Facilitation of Prevention Activities, including the Blue Ribbon Campaign during Child Abuse Prevention Month, and collaborations throughout the year to promote awareness of ways to report child abuse and neglect, distributing prevention materials, advertisement campaigns targeting safe sleep environments for infants and dangers of leaving children in vehicles;
- Monitoring of the Community Based Child Abuse and Prevention (CBCAP0 grant and work of subgrantees;
- Monitoring the Children's Justice Act (CJA) grant and work of subgrantee;
- Facilitation of Citizen Review Panels (CRP);
- Monitoring of the Child Abuse and Prevention Treatment Act (CAPTA) grant, including Mississippi Centralized Intake program;
- Monitoring of Child and Family Support Services Program (CFSSP) for Family Preservation, Family Reunification, and Family Support under grant for Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF);
- Administration of Children's Trust Fund (CTF) for prevention services;
- Participation on state-level Child Death Review Team;
- Administration of the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC);
- Administration of Fingerprint Program to support criminal background checks to protect children pursuant to the Adam Walsh Act;
- Administration of the Central Registry program; and
- Other collaborations and initiatives regarding prevention and protection as recommended by the CFSR, COA, and MSA.

### **D. Resource Development Unit**

In 2010, the Resource Development Unit was created within DFCS to ensure the delivery of an adequate array of services in the State of Mississippi through maximizing the use of existing services and coordinating the development of new services through contracts, collaboration with other agencies and service providers, and coordination of service/resource related work within DFCS and the state as a whole. The Resource Development Unit ensures the compatibility of existing services and newly created services with the principles and practices required by the MSA, the Children's Bureau, COA standards, and the Practice Model.

A Bureau Director II was hired to build the Resource Development Unit. In November 2010, a Division Director II was hired and is directly responsible for supervising the program manager and the Projects Officer IIIs. In addition, the Division Director II collaborates with provider nonprofit agencies and searches for new resources for the state.

In December 2010, a Program Manager was hired and is responsible for creating a Statewide Resource Directory that will assist DFCS Workers in locating needed resources for families and children. The Resource Directory was completed and placed on the DFCS website for the use of field staff as well as the general public.

The Resource Development Unit created the Interpreter Program in April 2011. This program consists of a supervisor, 3 interpreters in the field assisting Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

clients and a Language Assistance Coordinator monitor for compliance. DFCS also contracts with interpreters of any given language needed, including American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters for hearing impaired clients.

In June 2012, the Resource Development Unit hired an Educational Liaison to provide training, assistance with obtaining educational services and intervening with school districts to seek services for DFCS foster children. Based on federal requirements, DFCS is responsible for services needed for children. The Educational Liaison is responsible for training DFCS field staff on the following:

- Caseworkers shall review the educational record of each child who enters custody for the purpose of identifying the child's general and, if applicable, special educational needs and shall document the child's educational needs within 30 calendar days of his/her entry into foster care.
- Caseworkers shall take reasonable steps to ensure that school-age foster children are registered for and attending accredited schools within three business days of initial placement or any placement change, including while placed in shelters or other temporary placements.
- Reasonable efforts shall be made to ensure the continuity of a child's educational experience by keeping the child in a familiar or current school and neighborhood, when this is in the child's best interests and feasible, and by limiting the number of school changes the child experiences.

The Educational Liaison provided training to each region per the Practice Model Rollout. The training curriculum consists of the information stated above, training on Individual Educational Plans (IEP) and the Individual Disability Education Act (IDEA). As of May 2014, all DFCS Regions have completed the educational training. Beginning July 2014, ongoing training is held four times annually to keep the field staff informed of necessary information to best serve children in the education realm.

The Resource Development Unit hired a Nurse IV Program Manager who works with the Magnolia Health Plan to provide medical, dental and mental health services for children. Magnolia Health Plan is a managed care program through the Division of Medicaid (DOM), providing services for approximately 3,500 foster children. The Nurse Program Manager is responsible for carrying out the Psychotropic Drug Plan.

The Resource Development Unit collaborates on an ongoing basis by attending and participating in other state child serving agencies and private provider agencies meetings and advisory panels including the following agencies and panels: Mississippi Department of Mental Health, Division of Medicaid, Mississippi Department of Health, Mississippi Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, Mississippi Department of Education and the Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP), Mississippi Families as Allies, Inc., Community Mental Health Center MAP Teams, State Level Case Review, First Steps, ARC of Mississippi, MTOP Grant Executive Steering Council, Interagency Coordinating council for Children and Youth (ICCCY), Interagency System of Care Council (ISOCC), Regional Implementation Team (13 statewide), and State

Office Sub-teams, as well as internal implementation meetings and sub-teams.

DFCS made progress toward the goals outlined in the 2010-2014 Child and Family Services Five Year Plan. For the period of October 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011 the direction changed with the implementation of the Mississippi Child Welfare Practice Model (Practice Model). The Five Year Plan called for assessing for dental, medical, and mental health services to ensure easier access to services. The Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) conducted in May 2010 reported that dental and medical services provided to children rated a strength. DFCS identified accessing mental health services for the children and families served as an area needing improvement. DFCS continues to ensure the availability of dental and medical services and to enlist additional resources located within each county.

#### **E. Policy Unit**

The Policy Unit was created to coordinate revision of all sections of the DFCS Policy Manual and to ensure the existence and consistency of a current and adequate DFCS Policy Manual. This Unit also ensures that DFCS policy addresses necessary federal and state mandates along with the safety, permanency and well-being of children through the outlining of a strong Family Centered Practice Policy.

Inclusion of the principles and practices of the MSA, COA standards, and the Practice Model are essential in creating a revised policy. The Policy Unit is required to make the Manual available to all staff via the DFCS Connection Web, as well as issue Bulletins of changes in policy in the interim while sections are in the process of revision.

Since the inception of the Policy Unit in August 2009, a Policy Sub-Team was developed to support addressing DFCS policy needs and questions. The Policy Sub-Team also assists in the development of new policy, reviewing and recommending changes when necessary. The Policy Sub-Team consists of different representatives within DFCS.

All sections of the DFCS Policy Manual were revised and approved as agency policy through the prescribed process. As of 2014, Limited English Proficiency (LEP) policy has been added to the Policy Manual. The DFCS Policy Manual has been posted to the DFCS Connection website for ease of access to every DFCS staff member and the MDHS website for public access.

The goals of the Policy Unit are to revise and develop policies, when necessary, to meet the requirements of federal and state mandates or practice changes; inform and guide DFCS staff regarding revised policies and procedures in coordination to the MSA, COA standards, and the Mississippi Child Welfare Practice Model, in relation to DFCS policy needs.

#### **F. Permanency Planning/Placement Unit**

This unit relates to Title IV-B, Part I (Stephanie Tubbs Jones Child Welfare Services), Adoption Services (including Adoption Assistance), Unaccompanied Refugee Minor Program, and Congregate Care (including Therapeutic Licensure). Other responsibilities include Permanency Roundtables and Foster/Adoptive Parent Retention and Recruitment Programs.

## **G. Eligibility Unit**

A Division Director of Eligibility was hired September, 2009. The Eligibility Unit was created to ensure quality results pertaining to administering the eligibility payment program. This Unit provides support by interpreting DFCS eligibility policies and procedures to determine initial and ongoing eligibility of children in DFCS custody. Unit Staff review payment requests, determine payments, check Medicaid determination, communicate with the field workers, county offices, and facilitate solutions for over and underpayments. Unit Staff are responsible for setting up new case files as well as preparing, generating, and composing correspondence to ensure accuracy of all documentation in individual case files.

The Eligibility Unit ensures the availability and accessibility of effective, culturally competent services through education, training, innovation, monitoring and promotion of ongoing quality improvement and utilization of all areas of Title IV-E eligibility. DFCS provides individual entitlement for qualified children, partnership with universities to build social worker workforce, and maximizes potential strategies to increase state and federal funding in support of Title IV-E.

The Eligibility Unit completed the Program Improvement Plan (PIP) in August, 2010, along with revising and finalizing the State Plan for Title IV-E of the Social Security Act, Foster Care and Adoption Assistance for the State of Mississippi. Both the PIP and IV-E Plan were approved by the Children's Bureau. The secondary review of Mississippi's Title IV-E Foster Care Program was conducted in June, 2011. MDHS' Title IV-E foster care program was in substantial compliance with Federal eligibility requirements for the Period Under Review (PUR). The next primary review will be held August 2014.

The Eligibility Unit continues to ensure and implement existing services and newly created services to utilize for qualified children throughout the State of Mississippi. The Eligibility Unit assists courts throughout the State of Mississippi in achieving prompt permanency hearings, as well as continuing discussions with county judges concerning requirements of IV-E eligibility.

The Eligibility Unit coordinates revisions with the Policy Unit concerning procedures required by the MSA. The Eligibility Unit implements various strategies and proposed principles for funding, which outline short and long-term actions that build and utilize vital services to support Title IV-E.

### **Court Orders**

The Uniform Court Orders are now hyperlinked to the Mississippi Supreme Court website, <http://www.mssc.state.ms.us/>. Children's Bureau Regional Staff approved the language of the orders regarding (1) probable cause (2) the child remaining in the home would be "contrary to the welfare" of the child and (3) removal from the home is "in the best interest" of the child. Further, the pertinent orders contain the "reasonable efforts" to prevent removal or "reasonable efforts are not required" and exceptions for reasonable efforts are listed so the correct exception can be checked by the judge.

A MYCIDS software program was added in the Eligibility Unit to access and print court orders from counties throughout the state which are using MYCIDS effectively.

### Licensing and Safety

- Licensing and Safety training was completed in December 2011, which was presented by the training coordinators and regional ASWS, with emphasis on aspects of IV-E requirements and policy concerning licensing and safety. New workers receive training in Child Welfare Professional Development workshops regarding not placing children in unlicensed or unapproved homes. The following procedures are outlined as follows: The field worker enters a placement correction in MACWIS. This placement correction is sent to the eligibility worker's tickler for correction. If the correction cannot be made by eligibility for a specific reason, then eligibility contacts the worker. When the home is fully licensed, a copy of that license is sent to the eligibility unit and filed.

For the month of April 2014, according to the MWCURST2 Listing of Children with Eligibility Status Report, dated May 16, 2012, the total number of IV-E and CWS children was as follows:

| <b>Eligibility Status</b> | <b>Totals</b> |
|---------------------------|---------------|
| IV-E                      | 1,460         |
| CWS                       | 2,583         |
| Children in custody       | 4,043         |

Some of the reasons why there are more children eligible for CWS than IV-E are as follows:

- Court orders do not contain the appropriate language for IV-E eligibility.
- Excess or no income verification.
- Non-home removals.
- Non-relative removals from home.

### 2010-2014 CFSP Goals for the Eligibility Unit

- Provide individual entitlement for qualified children and maximize potential strategies to increase funding;
- Complete Program Improvement Plan (PIP);
- Complete State IV-E Plan;
- Maximize funding of retroactive claims through verification of permanency orders and court orders;
- Develop better communication skills/tools with all counties in the State of Mississippi;
- Meet with judges throughout the state to discuss importance of Title IV-E;
- Develop tracking system for documentation needed for each case file;
- Work with MACWIS to increase efficiency within the system pertaining to eligibility;
- Hire staff.

### Progress on 2010-2014 CFSP Goals

- State IV-E Plan was sent for approval June 4, 2013 and approved effective for July 1, 2013.

- IV-E training continues in all counties via telephonic conferences and on-the-job phone training.
- Retroactive claims continue due to permanency order completion and verification.
- Daily, weekly, and monthly pending spreadsheets of pending case file missing documentation are sent via email to all counties to increase efficiency and timeliness in obtaining documentation.
- Developed and distributed initial eligibility checklist to all counties for daily implementation to be filed with each case file.
- Copies of licensed homes are sent to the eligibility unit for tracking purposes and filed.
- Copies of fingerprinting and background checks are sent to the eligibility unit for tracking purposes and filed.
- Meeting with judges throughout the state continue to increase IV-E understanding.
- Quarterly eligibility tip sheet and Eligibility Unit procedures are sent throughout the state outlining criteria for IV-E eligibility.
- The Eligibility Unit hired additional staff to accommodate case load of the eligibility unit.
- Systematic review of case files continues via DFCS staff.
- Access was approved for the Eligibility Unit to use the Mississippi Youth Court Information Data System (MYCIDS) to print copies of court orders. MYCIDS assists the courts in meeting their timeframes according to Mississippi Statutes for child welfare.
- Worked with Division of Field Operations, Claims Unit, in 2012, researching over-payments and underpayments.

#### Progress after September 30, 2012

- A new Division Director was hired in the Eligibility Unit.
- Eligibility Clerks were hired in 10 Regions which will assist the Eligibility Unit in obtaining crucial information and documentation from the county workers to determine IVE/CWS eligibility.
- Eligibility workers in the state office now have access to Interwoven/Worksite in order to obtain verification of birth and social security cards.

#### Progress after September 30, 2013

- Eligibility Unit is preparing for the next Title IV-E Foster Care Eligibility Review scheduled for August 18 - 22, 2014.
- Title IV-E Foster Care Eligibility Review Prep Training is scheduled for August 8, 2014.

### **H. Administration Unit**

The Administration Unit is responsible for DFCS personnel transactions; property inventory; requisitions for equipment and supplies; space planning for staff increases, subgrants; performance-based contracts; reports to the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Children's Bureau regarding Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP), Child and Family Services Review (CFSR), Annual Progress Services Report (APSR), Program Improvement Plan(s) (PIP), collaboration with the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians and Indian Child Welfare Act Training for the judiciary, collaboration with the Administrative Office of Courts for training DFCS staff and judiciary; COA Risk Management Prevention (RPM) Standards and drafts responses and formal plans required by the MSA.

The Personnel Unit was reorganized to streamline the hiring process which effectively reduced the process time from months to 2-3 weeks between recommending a new hire, approval and reporting for work.

Major renovations to office space and buildings occurred between 2010-2014 to accommodate additional staff and to meet requirements of the accreditation process.

Performance Based Contracting was piloted in the Fall of 2012 with the issuances of requests for proposals for emergency shelters and regular group homes. Initially, five contracts for emergency shelters and four regular group homes were awarded effective January 1, 2013. The emergency shelters and group homes are approved for renewal July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015. Comprehensive therapeutic care providers came under contract December 31, 2013 to June 30, 2014. Therapeutic providers' contracts were awarded for July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015. During the process of implementing performance based contracting, multiple meetings have occurred to encourage provider participation in making decisions regarding measurable outcomes and to determine whether incentive, penalties or a combination of both, will become the structure for performance based contracting.

Performance Based Contracting Goals:

- Providers have clear accountability for results;
- DHS establishes a partnership dialogue with providers;
- Focus on outcomes and generate those outcomes;
- Clearly defined monitoring procedures to produce successful outcomes for children;
- Accurate data reporting;
- Continued and frequent feedback from providers regarding services to children;
- Ongoing updates and communication regarding services for children; and Goal of permanency for children.

(See Section IV for collaboration with the courts for training; Section VI for consultation with the Tribe; and Section XV regarding completion of the Program Improvement Plan in 2014.)

### **I. Budget & Financial Planning Unit**

Since the 2010-2014 CFSP was developed, DFCS has undergone organizational changes. Organizational changes included the separation of the Finance and Administration Unit. The Administration Unit consists of contracts/subgrants, inventory management, personnel and purchasing; and a Budget & Financial Planning Unit consists of the management and oversight of budgeting/forecasting, county bank accounts, county bookkeeping practices, grants management, hotel accommodations, over/under foster board payments, and travel reimbursements/out-of-state travel arrangements.

As required in the MSA, DFCS contracted with the Center for the Support of Families (CSF) to perform a financial assessment of the division and implemented measures to maximize federal funding. DFCS made substantial process in achieving the recommendations of CSF in conjunction with Hornby Zeller Associates (HZA) as outlined below.

As required DFCS updated the 2010-2014 CFSP seeking federal reimbursements for various types of expenses associated with DFCS employee participation in Master of Social Work

(MSW) programs, and recognized the possibility of expanding training to include Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) programs. As a result, DFCS obtained Title IV-E federal reimbursement for MSW programs with public universities which funded cohorts for DFCS employees pursuing a MSW; however, it was not feasible for DFCS to pursue partnerships for BSW programs.

DFCS enhanced the pre-service training program for new caseworkers and supervisors through a contract with the University of Mississippi, School of Social Work. Because many of the costs associated with pre-service training program were eligible for federal funding reimbursement, HZA recommended DFCS implement specified steps to maximize reimbursement. DFCS implemented steps to obtain federal reimbursement through new accounting procedures. The implemented steps allowed DFCS to identify casework staff during the eight weeks of pre-service training and allocate staff time to the training cost pool for an enhanced training Federal Financial Participation (FFP) rate.

The HZA financial assessment addressed the expansion of the DFCS in-house training program and made recommendations for capturing federal revenue for eligible training expenditures. As a result, DFCS implemented procedures to ensure allowable costs associated with the full-time trainers would be tracked and allocated appropriately to maximize federal funding.

The HZA financial assessment determined that DFCS was subsidizing costs associated with expenditures for supportive services for children and families with state funds as well as with funds from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Social Services Block Grant (SSBG). The assessment pointed out that TANF and SSBG funds were 100% federal but capped and fully expended on an annual basis. However, Title IV-E would represent an alternative and uncapped funding source. HZA recommended DFCS not rely on TANF and SSBG, but seek to reduce the amount of state funds required to fund supportive services for those cases in which the child is Title IV-E eligible. As a result, the Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS), Division of Budgets & Accounting (B&A) implemented procedures to file retroactive claims pursuant to Title IV-E on a quarterly basis.

The HZA financial assessment identified limitations in the Social Worker Random Moment Survey (RMS) process utilized by DFCS, finding that in certain instances it did not permit staff to report accurately on the activities they were engaged in at the time that the random sample was conducted. HZA recommended specific modifications in the RMS process and associated revisions to the cost allocation plan. As a result, B&A revised the RMS process which was reflected in the cost allocation plan that was updated and approved by the Department of Health & Human Services, Division of Cost Allocation.

As a result of the many changes in DFCS' efforts to maximize federal funding, it is evident that DFCS has made significant improvements between 2010 to 2014 in the tracking and claiming process for eligible Title IV-E costs which has increased the amount of federal revenue and has not been utilized to supplant DFCS' state funded budget.

### **J. Special Investigations Unit**

The Special Investigations Unit is responsible for investigating reports of child maltreatment that require special handling. This class of investigations includes any reports of maltreatment perpetrated on children in foster care, any child fatality or near fatality where abuse/neglect/exploitation is suspected, or any fatality or near fatality where DFCS has involvement or has had prior involvement with the child or family. In addition, the Special Investigations Unit conducts investigations that are deemed “high profile” or require extra discretion. The Unit consists of a Bureau Director I and thirteen specially trained investigators are being hired. The Unit also receives support from staff attorneys assigned to the Special Projects Unit.

## **VI. TRIBAL CONSULTATION**

The Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS), Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) and the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians (MBCI) made great progress achieving the cooperative goals during the Child and Family Services Plan period 2010-2014. DFCS maintained a collaborative relationship with the MBCI. DFCS continues to offer assistance to the Tribe in such areas as joint training, Independent Living services, foster care and adoption services.

DFCS will forward copies of this report to Mae Bell, Director of Social Services for the Tribe, and copy Sam Valentine with the Tribal Child Welfare Services.

### **Child and Family Services Plan Goals 2010-2014**

The goals relative to the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) were developed through multiple collaborative efforts with representatives of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. The consultation consisted of meetings at both the state and regional level at Five Year Strategic Planning events and included a stakeholders meeting between DFCS and Choctaw Family and Community Services.

**Goal 1:** Develop a protocol between DFCS and the Choctaw tribe to facilitate consistent handling of child protection situations related to tribal members. DFCS’ goal in this area over the next five years is to expand utilization of this protocol to include all counties with tribal populations and make this protocol known and available to all DFCS staff statewide.

**Progress:** This protocol was developed and continues to be utilized in Neshoba County, Mississippi, which is the county with the most extensive tribal population in the state of Mississippi. Approximately 65% of the Choctaw tribal population is located in Neshoba County. Utilization of this protocol was expanded to include all counties with tribal populations and the protocol is available to all DFCS staff statewide through annual ICWA training opportunities and information located on the DFCS Connection under Resources.

### **Uniform Rules of Youth Court Practice Revised to Include ICWA**

The Supreme Court Order amending the Mississippi Uniform Rules of Youth Court Practice was signed on July 30, 2012 by George C. Carlson, Jr., Presiding Justice, to include ICWA requirements under Rule 7. The Amended Rules are available on the Mississippi Supreme Court

website <https://courts.ms.gov/rules/msrules.html>. The inclusion of ICWA in the URYCP provides a unified process for handling cases which involve Native American children and outline the protocol for notification to the Tribe. Tribal sovereignty over Native American children is recognized.

**Goal 2:** Incorporate the protocol into policy, distribute it statewide and train the staff on the ICWA, in general, and specifically for Mississippi.

**Progress:** Training on the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) continues to be included in the Pre-Service Training for new hires and the Child Welfare Advanced Professional Development curricula. New curriculum was developed that is required for all new DFCS social workers and support staff. Choctaw Social Service's staff attended trainings on DFCS Practice Model Implementation, Maltreatment Training, Conducting Family Team Meetings and Safety and Risks Assessment tools. DFCS staff participated in tribal training on the Adam Walsh Act.

In addition, the State of Mississippi is in the process improving collaboration with the Mississippi Band of Choctaws' Social Services in coordinating protective service cases related to children of Choctaw families who are not covered or eligible for services through the Mississippi Band of Choctaws or their Social Services. Active case planning is pursued to maintain or reunite Native American families as soon as safely feasible when safety concerns are identified.

**Goal 3:** Develop a "Memorandum of Understanding" between the Choctaw Tribe and the State of Mississippi was a goal for development of a legally binding, fully operational Memorandum of Understanding within the 2010-2014 timeframe. Plans to accomplish this goal included increasing communication with the tribe on multiple levels, building a relationship of trust and cooperation and expanding the currently established relationships.

**Progress:** Following the first ICWA conference on June 22, 2011, negotiations reopened toward a Memorandum of Understanding between the MBCI and DFCS. Representatives from the MBCI judiciary, Tribal Attorney General's Office and DFCS drafted the Memorandum and presented it to the Tribal Counsel April 10, 2012. The MOU was signed October 25, 2012. The objectives of the Tribe and DFCS are to promote the safety and proper placement of Choctaw children. The MOU sets forth the respective duties for cases involving Choctaw children:

*The Tribe agrees to respond to any allegation of abuse or neglect within the Reservation; determine whether the child is an "Indian child" subject to the authority of the Tribe; to assist with placement of Choctaw children with Choctaw families; to aid the State in identifying Choctaw families and other tribal families living off-Reservation who may be eligible to serve as State "DFCS Resource Families"; to establish procedures to assist all State caseworkers when conducting monthly in-home assessments of Choctaw children on-Reservation; to jointly provide training once a year related to Choctaw culture and established protocols; to testify in State court proceedings involving Choctaw children living off-Reservation, whether or not they have assumed authority over the child; to report criminal charges in the appropriate jurisdiction if the Tribe is the investigating agency; to accompany DFCS workers when visiting Choctaw children on-Reservation.*

*The State agrees to respond to any allegation of abuse or neglect, including families of Choctaw heritage; to determine if a child is an "Indian child" and contact the Tribe immediately so they can assume authority; to jointly train annually these protocols; to testify in Tribal Court proceedings involving Choctaw children living on and off-Reservation; to make every effort to place Choctaw children living off-Reservation with Choctaw families; to report criminal charges in the appropriate jurisdiction if they are the investigating agency; to comply with agreed procedure for monthly in-home assessments of Choctaw children on-Reservation; to provide the Tribe with the Mississippi Central Intake phone number for all reports of abuse or neglect involving Choctaw children off-reservation; and to accompany Tribal workers, if requested, to visit Choctaw children off-reservation.*

**Goal 4:** Include Choctaw Social Services in training opportunities available to DFCS staff, as appropriate, and have regular meetings with tribal staff and administration on all levels at least twice a year with a goal of quarterly meetings within five years.

**Progress:** Training Opportunities:

Tribal representatives participated with federal and state reviewers during the Child and Family Services Review on May 17, 2010. Tribal Representatives with whom Mississippi has consulted include Maurice Calistro, Director, Human Resources; Tina Scott, Assistant Director of Human Resources; Mae Bell, Manager of Family and Children's Services; Pam Johnson, Supervisor of Child Welfare Workers; and Sam Valentine, Coordinator of Policy, Planning and Compliance. Plans include Tribal and DFCS yearly meetings to discuss practice procedures between the DFCS and Choctaw social service staff. As many front line workers as possible will participate and the program will include some relationship building elements in the meeting.

The Choctaw social service staff requested to participate in any training conducted by DFCS. The Tribe was invited to attend the Maltreatment and Safety Training. Two participants attended the training on August 10, 2010. In the Fall-Winter of 2010-2011, the Tribes and DFCS participated in cross-training events presented by DFCS regarding Quality Visits; Permanency Roundtables presented by the Casey Family Programs; cross-training organized by the Tribe in conjunction with Comprehensive Approaches to Sex Offender Management (CASOM) and DFCS ongoing training. Tribal social service staff are provided information regarding future training opportunities.

DFCS includes potential Choctaw foster parents, both on and off the reservation, in the pre-service foster parent training currently provided to all potential DFCS foster parents. DFCS has a goal of licensing two to five off-reservation Choctaw families as foster parents. This would aid in fostering connections with families and the tribe. Two families were located, but decided not to become licensed resource parents. A Resource Worker is specifically assigned to Neshoba County to assist in establishing permanent placements within the community where tribal connections and culture are most readily available.

Tribal Senior Youth Court Judge Briscoe (now Chief Justice Briscoe) has been actively involved with DFCS and attended the Permanency Summit with DFCS staff in November 2010. DFCS had extensive Tribal participation to develop Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) training in 2011, 2012 and 2013 on the MBCI Reservation. Collaboration for the 2014 ICWA training occurred in April 2014 and the keynote speaker has been identified, location secured and assistance of The Mississippi Judicial College enlisted for logistics, invitations and registration.

In February 2011, representatives of the Youth Court Judges, Administrative Office of Courts, Division of Family and Children's Center and the Choctaw Model Court met with the Tribal leader and requested permission to hold a training event on Tribal land regarding the Indian Child Welfare Act. A cross-training for the Tribe, judiciary and DFCS was developed with the full cooperation of the Tribal leader.

### **First Annual ICWA Conference**

On June 9-10, 2011, the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians (MBCI) hosted the first collaborative cross-training between the MBCI, the Mississippi Judiciary and Division Family and Children's Services (DFCS) at the Pearl River Resort. The conference was well attended with approximately 160 participants, including MBCI Drummers, Elders Dancers, the current Choctaw Princess, and Choctaw Children Dancers. The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) Conference was developed and sponsored by The MBCI Model Court, Forrest County Model Court, Administrative Office of Courts and DFCS Court Improvement Workgroup. This conference was made possible by funding through the Administrative Office of Courts Court Improvement Program. The Mississippi Judicial College provided all of the logistic services of equipment, location, meeting rooms, meals, registration and took care of many more behind-the-scenes details. The keynote speaker was provided by the National Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues in conjunction with the National Resource Center for Tribes.

Both tribal and legal representatives from at least ten states other than Mississippi participated in the ICWA Conference: Nevada, California, New Mexico, Washington, Oregon, Minnesota, Iowa and Texas. The Pechanga Tribe from Temecula, California attended. Representatives from the Casey Organization, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, the NRC for Tribes, the NRC for Legal and Judicial, the Department of Education, the Judiciary, including Chancery Judges, County Court Judges, Youth Court Judges and Referees, Prosecutors, Youth Court Defenders, Youth Court Counselors, Guardians *ad litem*, Attorney General's Office, Tribal Attorney General's Office, Office of Administrative Courts and individual attorneys, the Executive Director of the Mississippi Department of Human Services, the Deputy Administrator of Family and Children's Services, Director of Field Operations, DFCS Social Workers, the Director of MBCI Department of Family and Community Services and MBCI Social Services staff were in attendance.

### **Second Annual ICWA Conference**

The second ICWA Conference, "Pathways to Justice" was held May 31-June 1, 2012, hosted by the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians at the Golden Moon Pearl River Resort in Choctaw, Mississippi, with approximately 200 participants. Tribal nation

representatives from throughout the United States attended this historic conference including: the Alabama Coushatta Tribe of Texas, the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma, the Blackfeet of Montana, Pomo of California, the Coast Miwok of California, the Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma, White Earth Indians of Minnesota, Lakota Indians of North and/or South Dakota, Tlingit Indians of the Pacific Northwest, Yaqui Indians of Arizona, Oueaha Indians of Nebraska, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians.

### **Third Annual ICWA Conference**

The third annual Indian Child Welfare Act Conference convened August 14-16, 2013, at the invitation of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians on the Choctaw Reservation, Pearl River Resort. Approximately 200 persons participated in the conference including registered participants, speakers, MBCI Elder Dance Group, MBCI Drummers, MBCI vendors and DFCS vendors. According to several National Resource Centers, Mississippi is the first State in the United States to develop this depth of collaboration with the federally recognized sovereign Tribe – the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, who reside within the borders of Mississippi. The highlight of the Conference was a professionally produced ICWA video featuring interviews with Native Americans demonstrating the trauma suffered as a result of relocation apart from their Tribe. The video was featured at other conferences across the United States. The video can be viewed at: [https://courts.ms.gov/trialcourts/youthcourt/youthcourt\\_yevideos.html](https://courts.ms.gov/trialcourts/youthcourt/youthcourt_yevideos.html)

### **Fourth Annual ICWA Conference**

The fourth annual ICWA Conference is scheduled for August 14, 2014 at Choctaw, Mississippi. A keynote speaker has been identified and availability confirmed to discuss current cases involving Native American children.

**Goal 5:** Update the state listing of all tribes, national contact persons and contact information. Although the information is available, not all staff know how to access this information. DFCS will insure the ICWA Designated Agents for every tribe and region are posted on the MACWIS web and distributed to every Regional Director. The Regional Director will distribute the document to every ASWS in the state so they can distribute it to their staff and print a hard copy for every DFCS office. The procedures required to access the information will be published through the Professional Enhancement Newsletter which is provided to all employees via e-mail monthly. The Professional Enhancement Newsletter will also be utilized to provide policy reminders on the ICWA including the steps involved in determining heritage and jurisdiction. All staff will continue to receive training on the ICWA during the intensive training modules provided to all new direct service staff.

**Progress:** The State updated the state listing of all tribes, national contact persons and contact information. This information is available at <http://dfcsmacweb/dfcsweb/Resource.htm> (DFCS Connection).

**ICWA Tribal Directory** (*When contacting a tribe to find out if a child is a member of the tribe or is eligible for membership, ask to be directed to the Tribal Enrollment office. Questions related to jurisdiction, intervention, relative placements, and other **Indian Child Welfare Act** concerns should be directed to the Social Service or ICWA office)*)

The procedures required to access the information were published through the Professional Enhancement Newsletter which is provided to all employees via e-mail monthly. The Professional Enhancement Newsletter is utilized to provide policy reminders on the ICWA, including the steps involved in determining heritage and jurisdiction. All staff continue to receive training on the ICWA during the intensive training modules provided to all new direct service staff.

**Goal 6:** Preserve Indian families in a culturally sensitive manner. This goal includes culturally based prevention and protection services as well as ensuring any Indian children removed from their homes be placed with priority given to relatives, other Choctaw families, and other tribes. They will only be placed with families outside the Indian culture as a last resort. Placement with relatives on the reservation will require a home evaluation and foster care licensing of the relatives any time the tribe does not assume jurisdiction of the children to be placed. These homes must meet all DFCS licensing requirements.

**Progress:** Preserve Indian Families:

**Identification of Tribal Affiliation-Notification of State Proceedings**

The tribes of affiliation, as well as Indian parents, are notified any time DFCS is involved with a child or family that meets tribal membership requirements. The Choctaw tribe is available to assist the Division of Family and Children's Services with tribal identification and notification as needed. DFCS and Choctaw Social Services made cooperative efforts to identify potential Native American resource parents.

Sam Valentine, Choctaw Social Services, met with DFCS and Atlantic Coast Child Welfare Implementation Center (ACCWIC) representatives in August 2010 to discuss a collaborative effort to conduct targeted recruitment of Choctaw Foster Families "off reservation" in conjunction with recruitment efforts the Tribal social services plans to conduct in Choctaw churches.

ICWA Notice Posters regarding protecting rights of Native Americans were provided to Chancellors, Youth Court Judges, and Youth Court Referees in March 2014. A letter signed by the Executive Director of the Mississippi Department of Human Services was included with the Posters requesting they be placed near or on the entrance to the courtroom or immediately inside the courtroom. The Posters instruct Native Americans to let the Judge know of their heritage.

DFCS will continue to maintain a working relationship with the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians Social Services on the local level and take every opportunity to expand that relationship into a statewide collaboration. DFCS was invited to collaborate with the Tribe for the Tribe's Child Abuse Awareness KICK Celebration on April 16, 2014.

## **Measurement of ICWA Contact**

### Narrative Contact Needed and Families with Native Heritage Reports

As of April 2010, the ICWA Narrative Contact Needed and Families with Native Heritage report in MACWIS indicates that of the 4,915 open cases, 4,079 show ICWA contact was made and 836 show no ICWA contact was made. The percentage of ICWA contact statewide is 82.99%.

As of April 2011, the ICWA Narrative Contact Needed and Families with Native Heritage report in MACWIS indicates that of the 4,780 open cases, 3,792 show ICWA contact was made and 988 show no ICWA contact was made. The percentage of ICWA contact statewide is 79.33%. [Report MWZICW2S – ICWA Narrative Contact Needed & Families with Native Heritage]

As of April 2012, the ICWA Narrative Contact Needed and Families with Native Heritage report in MACWIS indicates that of the 1,908 open cases, 1,425 show ICWA contact was made and 988 show no ICWA contact was made. The percentage of ICWA contact statewide is 74.68%. [Report MWZICW2S – ICWA Narrative Contact Needed & Families with Native Heritage]

As of April 2013, the ICWA Narrative Contact Needed and Families with Native Heritage report in MACWIS indicates that of the 1,719 open cases, 1,145 show ICWA contact was made and 573 show no ICWA contact was made. The percentage of ICWA contact statewide is 66.66%. [Report MWZICW2S – ICWA Narrative Contact Needed & Families with Native Heritage]

As of April 2014, the ICWA Narrative Contact Needed and Families with Native Heritage report in MACWIS indicates that of the 4,553 open cases, 2,371 show ICWA contact was made and 2,182 show no ICWA contact was made. The percentage of ICWA contact statewide is 52.07%. [Report MWZICW2S – ICWA Narrative Contact Needed & Families with Native Heritage]

## **VII. FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENT RECRUITMENT**

### Diligent Recruitment of Families for Children in the Foster Care System

The primary focus of the Diligent Recruitment Grant activities during this reporting period was planning and initial implementation. There was some staff turn-over with the Director and a Recruitment Support Specialist resigning. A Recruitment Support Specialist was promoted to director and two new Recruitment Support Specialists were hired. The Grant Implementation Team (GIT) including MDHS staff, private service providers, resource parents, foster youth or former foster youth, and other community stakeholders has met quarterly during this reporting period.

The grant team worked with MACWIS to gather data needed to inform recruitment and retention efforts. Resource Family and Resource Staff surveys were developed and executed in an effort to gain needed data not otherwise readily available. Survey findings were compiled and distributed to grant staff as well as resource staff in the initial four grant rollout regions. Additionally, community profile information (Family Portraits) were compiled by county for the initial rollout regions and disseminated to project staff as well as Regional Implementation Teams (RIT). The

Family Portrait information has been used by the RITs to develop Regional Recruitment Plans tailored to each county in the region.

Grant activities rolled out by region according to the following schedule:

- Regions I-S, II-W-Beginning January 2012
- Regions IV-N, V-W-Beginning July 2012
- Regions I-N, IV-S-Beginning Sept 2013
- Regions III-N, III-S, V-E, VII-E, II-E, VI, VII-W-Beginning January 2014 with a conference to bring all of these regions on board.

A preliminary evaluation design was developed by the Project Evaluator during the reporting period. The development of the evaluation design (pre-post and matched comparison group) took into consideration the project approach/key activities, readiness factors, and plans for program implementation as provided by project staff. Evaluation training was provided to the regions via teleconference during this reporting period.

Update:

During this reporting period, the grant leadership team and staff continued to add additional regions. By September 2013 the first 4 roll-out regions, Regions I-S, II-W, IV-N, and V-W were all in the implantation phase of the grant. The planning phase began with Regions IV-S and I-N. Each of the four initial roll out regions implemented their written recruitment plans and initial evaluation data is currently forthcoming. Implementation of grant activities outlined in regional recruitment plans became the primary focus of the grant team. The grant team spent time developing and/or securing recruitment tools (such as posters, business cards, talking points, etc.) needed for plan implementation. The newer regions are currently developing some additional tools, but primarily are using tools which have already been used for implementation.

The grant leadership team continued to have monthly calls during this reporting period. Regular communication among the team members has proven to be beneficial to the continued success of the project. Topics such as activities updates, next steps and regional successes/challenges were regularly addressed during the calls.

Recruitment Support Specialists continued to collect completed resource family applicant intake forms from the 4 initial roll-out regions on a monthly basis. The forms were then reviewed to ensure they had been completed properly. Resource workers were notified of any missing or incomplete information. This process has helped ensure all potential applicants are tracked throughout the application and licensure process and all qualified applicants have access to the home study process. Evaluation data based on these forms should be forthcoming within the next reporting period.

During the previous reporting period a case-record review instrument was developed and refined for collecting pre- and post-project data relevant to measuring expected outcomes. Recruitment Support Specialists have completed case reviews utilizing the MACWIS system and the newly developed review instrument. The completed instruments were sent to the grant evaluator to use for tracking purposes.

The major project tasks during this reporting period included continued implementation in Regions 1-South and 2-West, moving them from community awareness projects to begin implementing contemplation projects. Planning and implementation in Regions 4-North and 5-West have continued as well as initial planning with Regions I-North and 4-South. Grant activities continued with a high level of momentum during this reporting period. A variety of activities were completed as the grant team fully engaged in implementation of concrete tasks and the development of materials. A Diligent Recruitment Conference was held in January 2014 where all other regions were introduced to the grant project. Each Region began writing Regional Recruitment Plans during this conference. Final plans were submitted in March 2014 and have been approved.

## VIII. MONTHLY CASEWORKER VISIT DATA AND STATE PLAN REQUIREMENTS

DFCS continues to look at various options to utilize the available IV-B Subpart 2 funding, recognizing that the quality of front-line staff, worker turnover, high caseloads, overwhelming administrative burdens, lack of supervisory support and the minimal level of knowledge and experience of staff are some of the challenges of public child welfare staff recruitment and staff retention that can affect children's safety and permanency. Systemic improvement, such as accreditation and the enhancement of supervisory training and supports are expected to lessen worker stress by improving the working environment. The Accreditation process has facilitated high-quality service delivery because it requires reasonable caseloads and reduces the number of staff a supervisor must oversee. Supervisory training that focuses on leadership skills and clinical practices will help in improving communication and decision making.

MACWIS allows for tracking the caseworker visits with the child. The criteria for this contact to be counted are:

- Any assigned DFCS caseworker responsible for the child (either from the county of responsibility/jurisdiction or the county of service) must be the same person who made and documented the visit
- At least one visit must have occurred in the child's placement setting
- The visit must be documented as:
  - Foster Child
  - Face-to-Face visit
  - Child's name shall be included as a participant
  - Location of the visit (or home/placement setting contacts)

All children who are in DFCS custody are included in the reporting population.

DFCS policy requires the County of Responsibility (COR) worker to maintain twice monthly face-to-face contact with all foster children placed in the COR County. If a foster child remains in Mississippi, but is placed outside the COR, the County of Service (COS) Worker is responsible for making the monthly face-to-face visits with the child, beginning the calendar month after the child is placed (the COR Worker will see the child in the placement month).

The assigned DFCS direct service worker, regardless of whether a child's foster care placement is being directly supervised by DFCS or by a contract agency, shall meet with the child in person and, where age-appropriate, alone at least twice monthly to conduct such visits. During these visits, the worker will assess the child's safety and well-being, service delivery, and achievement of permanency and other service goals. This assessment should be on-going and the need for more frequent visits by the Worker should be documented. At least one of the monthly visits must be in the placement setting. Visiting with the child outside the placement setting is suggested in order to allow the child to freely express his/her feelings about the placement. The COR Worker will also visit the child quarterly in the placement setting. Twice monthly contacts will be documented in MACWIS within 5 working days of the visit.

DFCS requests that all children placed through ICPC in another state receive contacts at a minimum of once a month in the placement setting by the worker in the receiving state. It is also the expectation of DFCS staff to have contact with children placed through ICPC in Mississippi to be seen according to policy for Mississippi children.

Some children may be in care in Mississippi, but their parents or primary caretakers have moved out of state. Even if Mississippi has requested that the state of residence work with the parents, the Mississippi direct service worker must continue to maintain bi-monthly face-to-face contact with the child. A report on such visits is submitted to the child welfare agency of the state where the child's parents are located so the state of residence may be able to share with the parents the child's safety and well-being.

In the cases where special circumstances exist, including, but not limited to, children with ICPC placements or children who are on runaway status, an explanation must be documented in the narratives as to why contact was not possible. Children in custody, who are placed out-of-state in facilities or with relatives and are not being seen by the receiving state staff, should be seen once every six months by DFCS staff and the visit documented in MACWIS. (42 U.S.C. 675 § 475(5)(A)(ii)). More frequent contact may be required at the discretion of the ASWS.

If the child in custody is being seen face-to-face once a month in the placement by the receiving state staff, a report on the visit by the Receiving State Staff should be sent to the DFCS of the state in which the child's parents reside so that DFCS may share the information with the child's parents. The report must detail the child's circumstances and the extent to which the out-of-state placement meets the child's best interest or special needs.

If the Receiving State has not reported the face-to-face contact for the month, DFCS staff must contact the Receiving State for the information. This information shall be entered in MACWIS. More frequent contact including telephone calls and emails shall be made by the COR Worker.

The specifics of the annual report are defined by the Children's Bureau Program Instruction (ACYF –CB-PI-12-01) issued January 6, 2012:

- For each FFY's 2012 – 2014: The total number of visits made by caseworker on a monthly basis to children in foster care during a fiscal year must not be less than 90% of the total number of such visits that would occur if each child were visited once every month.

- For FFY 2015 and each FFY thereafter: The total number of visits made by caseworker on a monthly basis to children in foster care during a fiscal year must not be less than 95% of the total number of such visits that would occur if each child were visited once every month.
- FFY's 2012 and thereafter: At least 50% of the total number of monthly visits made by caseworkers to children in foster care during a fiscal year must occur in the child's residence.

Under this instruction, Mississippi is not required to report visits for youth in foster care who are age 18 and older. Mississippi is required to report caseworker visit data for youth who meet the following criteria:

- Experienced at least one full month in custody during the reporting FFY
- Children placed in an out-of-state foster care placement are included in the data reporting population of the state that has placement and care responsibility
- Children who are on trial home visit
- Children who are on run away status from a foster care placement
- Children in foster care who are covered by a title IV-E agreement between the State title IV-E agency and an Indian Tribe or another agency

To prevent duplication of the number of children in the reporting population, a child with more than one foster care episode during the 12- month period is considered one child.

| <b>Reporting Year</b> | <b>Projected Face-to-Face Contact</b> | <b>Projected Contact in Placement Setting</b> |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| 2013                  | 90.0%                                 | 58.08%  |
| 2014                  | 90.0%                                 | 58.08%  |
| 2015                  | 95.0%                                 | 58.08%  |
| 2016                  | 95.0%                                 | 58.08%  |

DFCS FY 2012 and 2013 Worker/Child Contact is as follows:

| <b>Reporting Year</b> | <b>Face-to-Face Contact</b> | <b>Contact in Placement Setting</b> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2012                  | 77.16%                      | 90.27%                              |
| 2013                  | 66.20%                      | 88.38%                              |

### Plan to Achieve 90 Percent

Action steps to ensure that the total number of monthly caseworker visits to children in foster care is not less than 90 percent of the total visits that would be made if each child were visited once per month:

Mississippi is required by the MSA to make two caseworker visits with child, with one visit in the placement, and the visit must be made by the assigned worker, which exceeds the federal requirement above. In order to reach this requirement, the following actions steps are in place and become part of the Regional Action Plan in the Regions. All 13 Regions are in some stage of Practice Model Implementation.

The Regions meeting or exceeding 90 percent have implemented the following actions:

- Review MACWIS reports at monthly regional staff meetings;
- Utilize Foster Care Review (FCR) reports and Evaluation and Monitoring (EMU) reports to identify areas within each region where improvement efforts are needed (overall and case-specific) with regard to the frequency and the quality of caseworker visits with children;
- Utilize the Regional CQI-Sub Teams and the State Level CQI Sub-Team in identifying, addressing areas needing improvement, and developing action plans surrounding the area of caseworker visits with children in foster care as well as in-home services cases (Protection and Prevention).
- Utilize and adhere to the corrective action process for specific children identified during case reviews (FCR and EMU) in which they are reported to have not had face-to-face contact with their caseworker and/or any representative from the DFCS as required by agency policy.
- ASWSs justify any discrepancies before their peers;
- ASWSs hold workers accountable to make the contacts and check progress by the 25th to see that they are made (which allows time to make the monthly visit and capture information on the monthly MACWIS report).
- Discover data entry errors which appear to be a missing contact i.e. such as not putting the child's name in the participant box.
- Require the assigned worker to make the initial (first) contact with each child in care by the 15th of the month. The ASWS staffs each case monthly to ensure two visits per month. Prior to DFCS staffing levels increasing, the COR workers were assisting with monthly visits in COS counties that were under staffed. Presently, COS counties are making the monthly contacts and the COR worker makes at least one quarterly visit with the child. During monthly case staffings, the ASWS reviews the case with the assigned worker to ensure two face-to-face visits are made. The ASWS identifies and addresses any barriers. If visits are not made as required following this process, the ASWS escalates this to the RD who in turn escalates to the DFO for corrective actions.
- Systemic issues were identified during a process where RDs reported monthly to DFO every child who did not receive two visits per month. Those systemic issues are outlined next.
- Systemic issues with MACWIS reports have been addressed, i.e. when a new worker is assigned; the report only captures the visit made by the new worker. The former worker

assigned made a visit before the transfer to the new worker, but that visit is not captured on the report, thereby showing the child was visited twice in the same month, but by a different assigned caseworker.

- Systemic issues with ICPC cases are being addressed because an ICPC worker in another state, while making the required visit, cannot enter the information into MACWIS. The DFCS worker cannot enter the visit by the ICPC worker but can only list themselves as a “participant”, which is not counted.
- Runaways cannot be located to visit, but they are still counted in the caseload as requiring two visits per month, with one visit in the placement.
- Systemic issues have been addressed with children who have been released from DFCS custody, but still have SSI funds, are still counted on the caseloads because the case cannot be closed as long as money is pending distribution. DFCS cannot change the recipient and forward the funds. SSI Funds must be returned to Department of Medicaid for payee changes.
- DFCS is systematically cleaning up dormant cases which can affect the data negatively at first.
- Systemic issues with MACWIS were addressed in a comprehensive assessment regarding electronic case management and data system. DFCS is pursuing a system upgrade to simplify documentation for users.

The above action steps were communicated to all Regional Directors, who will address the action steps with the ASWSs.

## **IX. QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM**

### **Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Unit**

As Mississippi continues to implement the provisions of the MSA, COA standards, and practices within the Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR), DFCS CQI continues growing in its quest to be thoroughly integrated into the ongoing work of the division, serving primarily as a means of reinforcing the practices which have been implemented in the state. CQI is a means of keeping the mission and vision in clear focus for staff in the field and as a primary means of sustaining the improvements achieved in practice and outcomes over time. In order for it to serve that function, CQI must continue monitoring for the practices put into place, providing sufficient feedback to staff to inform practice, decision making and resource allocation.

DFCS has developed CQI instruments and processes that are coordinated with and integrated into the Mississippi Child Welfare Practice Model. As the Practice Model implementation completed, DFCS has developed specific outcome measures and instruments that include the components of the Practice Model. As DFCS continues to develop CQI instruments and procedures for obtaining information, CQI will make sure that these practices are routinely monitored as a part of the Practice Model, so there is a basis for determining conformity to practice requirements, but also to use the CQI process to reinforce these practices on an ongoing basis at the local level. Similarly, the Settlement Agreement, COA standards, and the CFSR include requirements that are less oriented toward direct practice and more oriented toward the agency’s capacity to support good practice in the field.

In developing strategies for implementing the many requirements of the *Olivia Y. Settlement Agreement* and the COA standards, DFCS understands that these requirements must be presented in ways that caseworkers and supervisors in the field can understand them in relation to their work with children and families and in relation to the mission and values. DFCS intends for these many requirements to lead to measurable improvements in the outcomes of the work with children and families, rather than simply being put into place as a compliance process. DFCS has framed these requirements within a child welfare practice model that continues to change the way staff interacts with children and families and fulfill the compliance obligations at the same time. DFCS' CQI process is designed in accordance with the Mississippi Child Welfare Practice Model (Practice Model), and thereby supported its implementation and continues to support sustainability across the division, providing a thoroughly integrated and consistent way of serving children and families.

#### Evaluation and Monitoring Unit (EMU)

This unit is responsible for monitoring and evaluating practice to ensure compliance with DFCS standards and protocol.

#### The goals for Evaluation and Monitoring for the coming year are:

- Continue to produce deliverables for the CFSR PIP, COA, and MSA requirements;
- Hire a Program Specialist for the Evaluation and Monitoring Unit to assist with management of information coming in from and going out to the regions. The Program Specialist will also assist with coordinating the annual regional on-site reviews.
- Recruitment efforts are underway for the remaining vacant positions with it being anticipated that all will be filled by July 2013.
- Update the CQI plan for SFY 2013 and beyond;
- Take part in the development of and issuance of an annual CQI report for the July 2011 through June 2012 time period and an annual CQI report for the July 2012 through June 2013 time period;
- Conduct baseline reviews in Region 7-West, Region 6, and Region 2-East;
- Conduct annual follow-up reviews in Regions 5-West, 5-East, 1-South, 2-West, 3-South, 3-North, and 4-South;
- Continue the monitoring of the state's validated data indicators to track progress and areas needing improvement to inform practice and drive improvement efforts;
- Conduct monthly case reviews on a local level in the regions consisting of regular case reviews and engaging community partners and other stakeholders in the CQI process;

#### Evaluation and Monitoring Unit Accomplishments since its inception in 2009:

- To date, 12 of the 13 Evaluation and Monitoring Liaison positions have been filled;
- The Evaluation and Monitoring Unit has conducted baseline CQI reviews in all of Mississippi's 13 regions and at least one annual follow-up review in all 13 regions. Depending on their Practice Model roll-out schedule, some regions have had 4 and 5 annual follow-up reviews;
- The Evaluation and Monitoring Unit has filled two Program Administrator, Senior positions for supervision of the Evaluation and Monitoring Liaisons, and assist with report writing, coordinating on-site case reviews, and staff development;

- The Evaluation and Monitoring Unit has gone from using a paper review instrument to an automated review instrument that includes the ability to score the 24 review instrument items as a Strength or Area Needing Improvement;
- Data training was conducted for all Foster Care Review (FCR) and EMU staff in February 2012 with assistance from the National Resource Center for Child Welfare and Data Technology (NRCCWDT). This included an overview of the data indicators, MSA and CFSR standards and the agency's performance in meeting those standards; user guide information on how each data report is compiled within MACWIS, and how staff can and should utilize this information for the purpose of improvement efforts.
- The Evaluation and Monitoring Unit's automated review instrument has reporting capabilities and can distinguish between baseline, monthly, annual, and special reviews by region or state and by case type (foster care or in-home services);
- The Evaluation and Monitoring Unit was assigned a Program Specialist position which has been filled. The Program Specialist assists the Evaluation Monitoring Director and the program supervisors (Program Administrators, Senior) with coordination of on-site case reviews, developing on-site case review samples, coordination of stakeholder survey distribution, data entry, report writing, special monitoring such as AFCARS Element 57, and other administrative duties within the Evaluation and Monitoring Unit and the Office of Continuous Quality Improvement as a whole;
- The Evaluation and Monitoring Unit has established CQI sub-teams in each of Mississippi's 13 regions for proactively identifying performance issues and addressing barriers to assist with improvements in the regions;
- The Evaluation and Monitoring Unit has established a Data-to-Action process in which data from regional on-site annual case reviews, MACWIS data, and stakeholder survey data are combined and presented to the region in an effort to assist them with annual improvement efforts. These Data-to-Action meetings occur within 30 working day of the finalization of the regions' annual CQI report and are held in a workgroup format. The Data-to-Action meeting includes other CQI staff (Foster Care Review, Data Analysis staff), the Regional Director, the Regional Area Social Work Supervisors, external and internal stakeholders, and other key agency staff within the region (Adoption staff, Independent Living staff, Practice Coaches, etc.); These meetings are used to identify strengths and areas of needed improvement in order to inform practice and aide in program improvement plan efforts within the regions. Data from the annual follow-up review, FCR data, MACWIS reports and data dashboard information drive the discussion in which ideas for improvement efforts are brought forth that are carried over into the Regional CQI Sub-Team meetings.
- The Evaluation and Monitoring Unit, Center for the Support of Families, the CQI Director, the Foster Care Review Director, the MACWIS Director, and the agency's MIS Unit, established a process for reporting and tracking corrective actions on issues observed during the course of on-site case reviews. The corrective action process covers issues of concern identified during Evaluation and Monitoring reviews, Foster Care Review, Maltreatment in Care Reviews, in addition to Complaints tracking, AFCARS monitoring, and Data Validation efforts;
- The Evaluation and Monitoring Unit has implemented a targeted case review process for focusing on particular items on a larger scale/sample that the regions are working to improve upon;

- Two Maltreatment in Care Reviewer positions (Program Manager) were filled in May 2013 to conduct the maltreatment in care reviews. An additional position (Special Projects Officer, IV) was secured and filled in June 2014 to conduct quality assurance of the completed maltreatment in care reviews, assist with workloads, make review assignments, data entry, monthly reporting, and tracking of safety and practice issues that are due for corrective/remedial actions, and (eventually) to supervise the maltreatment in care reviewers;
- The Evaluation and Monitoring Unit has been involved with special reviews in collaboration with the Federal Court Monitor and the Children's Bureau such as CFSR PIP special reviews and data reporting, AFCARS and IV-E reviews, maltreatment in care and foster care reviews conducted in collaboration with the Federal Court Monitor, Foster Care Reviews within the agency, and Council on Accreditation (COA) site visits;
- Staff from the Evaluation and Monitoring Unit serve on state level workgroups such as the State Level CQI Sub-Team, the Training and Staff Development Sub-Team, and the MACWIS Sub-Team;
- The Evaluation and Monitoring Unit staff have participated in data training conducted by the Center for the Support of Families as well as the National Resource Center; Monthly webinars for EMU, FCR, and MACWIS staff on how to use data in child welfare practice and reporting began in July 2012. These webinars also include a module on using Excel in analyzing data.
- Data training was conducted for all Foster Care Review (FRC) and EMU staff in February 2012. This includes an overview of the data indicators, MSA and CFSR standards and the agency's performance in meeting those standards; user guide information on how each data report is compiled within MACWIS, and how staff can and should utilize this information for the purpose of improvement efforts.
- Four of the Evaluation and Monitoring staff have earned a Master's degree in Social Work (two of which have earned their Social Work License on a Master's Level). This in addition to two staff who were already licensed, Master's level Social Workers.
- EMU is currently participating in updates to the CQI Annual Reports and CQI Plan.
- The EMU developed a process for assigning, tracking and quality assurance of corrective action items resulting from the review process.

The below list of statewide data indicators were tracked during the Practice Model implementation and continue to be monitored for measuring performance to meet Olivia Y and COA requirements but most importantly to improve services to children and families across the state.

- Caseworker Face-to-Face Visits with Child;
- Caseworker Face-to-Face Visits with Parents of children with a goal of reunification;
- Investigation Timeliness for all Children
- Investigation Timeliness for Children in Custody
- Placement Stability (Children in care less than 12 months with 1-2 placements and all children in care by number of placements)
- TPR Reports;
- Rate of maltreatment in care;

- Children who have been in custody at least 6 months and have had a timely court review;
- Children in custody at least 12 months and have had a timely annual court review;
- Children discharged from custody and reunified with parents/caretakers in the last year are reunified within 12 months of latest removal from home;
- Children discharged in the last year upon the finalization of an adoption have had the adoption finalized within 24 months of the latest removal from home;
- Number of Children in Foster Care by Placement Type;
- Number of Children/Families in Protection/Prevention Cases;
- Number of Licensed/Pending Foster Family Homes;
- Foster parents, with at least 1 foster child residing in their home during the Period, have had a DFCS worker visit the home twice a month (therapeutic foster homes) or monthly (non-therapeutic foster homes), per Plan, and documented in the children's case records;
- Children in custody, age 14-20, that are provided with Independent Living services, per their service plan;
- No foster child remains in an emergency or temporary facility more than 45 days unless approval exception is signed by the Division Director;
- No child is placed in more than 1 emergency/temporary facility within 1 episode of foster care, unless an immediate placement is necessary to protect safety of the child or others and is certified, in writing, by the Regional Director;
- No child under 10 years of age is placed in any kind of congregate care setting unless child has exceptional needs that cannot be met in a relative or foster family home or child is a member of a sibling group, and the Regional Director has granted express written approval for the congregate-care placement;
- Sibling groups, with one or more of siblings under age 10, are not placed in congregate care settings for more than 45 days;
- During the trial home visit period, child's caseworker or a Family Preservation caseworker meets with the child in the home at least twice per month; and
- All foster children remaining in placement following a maltreatment investigation are visited by their caseworker twice a month for 3 months after investigation conclusion.

#### Safety Review Unit (SRU)

In order to improve practice surrounding investigations of children alleged to have experienced maltreatment in foster care, as well as to strengthen DFCS staff skills and abilities to take necessary steps to help ensure the safety and well-being of children in custody and as a requirement of the MSA, DFCS has developed a procedure and accompanying instrument for the review of all investigations of maltreatment in care. The overarching purpose of these reviews is two-fold:

- To ensure quality, comprehensive, and timely investigations into all allegations of maltreatment while a child is in out-of-home care; and
- To ensure all children in custody are maintained safely in their placements, are free from harm, and any concerns regarding child(ren)'s safety and case practice deficiencies are addressed and monitored by proper authorities.

The process includes requiring corrective actions be put into place by the field to address any safety or practice related deficiencies. These corrective actions are to be monitored by the Division of Evaluation and Monitoring within DFCS' Office of Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI).

The Modified Settlement Agreement (MSA) and the Year III Implementation Plan (IP3) of the MSA provide certain specific procedures and time frames for addressing deficiencies identified through the review of maltreatment in care investigations. As stated in MSA II.B.1, within 30 days of completion of any investigation of maltreatment while in custody, DFCS shall review the investigation, including:

- Identification of case practice deficiencies;
- Identification of remedial actions necessary to ensure the safety of the child who is the subject of the investigation as well as any other child in the home or placement as well as the timeframe in which such remedial action must take place; and
- Identification of any corrective action that is necessary to address deficiencies in case practice demonstrated by the investigation as well as the timeframe in which such remedial action must take place.

The Safety Review Unit (SRU) within the Evaluation and Monitoring Unit will conduct the reviews and monitor the quality of case practice in maltreatment in care investigations as well as the initiation and status of remedial actions to address issues identified in the MIC reviews. Specifically, the SRU will:

- Conduct reviews on maltreatment investigations of children in foster care, as identified by data from MACWIS weekly reports;
- Monitor the status of remedial actions resulting from the reviews;
- Review data reports reflecting state, regional, and county performance on various child welfare indicators associated with maltreatment in care; and
- Ultimately, provide aggregate data on safety and casework-related findings to analyze the qualitative and quantitative findings of the maltreatment in care reviews and compile results into reports that identify the strengths and areas needing improvement identified in the reviews.

The results of these reviews will be used to guide further improvements to assure the safety, permanency, and well-being of children while in DFCS custody. Trends in practice will be monitored by CQI.

The goals for the Safety Review Unit for the coming year are:

- Define the Maltreatment in Care Review process and the process for remedial/corrective actions;
- Develop a review tool and data base to collect the information gathered during these reviews;
- Develop the training for SRU staff on the review process and corrective action process;
- Request and develop a weekly run of the MACWIS report that identifies completed investigations of children reported to have been maltreated in care;

- Implement the process to review cases of maltreatment in care and report on findings for corrective actions by June 1, 2013.

#### Safety Review Unit Accomplishments since its inception in 2013

- The safety review unit maltreatment in care review process was implemented in 2013.
- The SRU hired two (2) Program Manager positions to conduct the maltreatment in care reviews. One additional supervisor position was hired during June 2014. The two Program Managers now report to this supervisor.
- The maltreatment in care review training and accompanying reference guide was finalized and SRU staff were trained;
- The maltreatment in care review instrument was finalized and implemented. The SRU has utilized this instrument for review purposes since its inception in June 2013
- Since June 2013, the SRU has conducted reviews on foster home and facility reports of maltreatment in care.
- The SRU developed a manual Excel report as part of MSA Year 4 Implementation Plan based upon data from the maltreatment in care review instrument data collection and the corrective action tracking system. This report is produced on a monthly basis.
- The SRU developed a process for assigning, tracking and quality assurance of corrective action items resulting from the review process.

#### Foster Care Review Unit

The Foster Care Review Unit carries out the court mandated DFCS review of foster care cases. The Foster Care Review Program conducts administrative case reviews on all children in Mississippi DFCS custody 6 months or longer. Those case reviews are held every 5 months for all children in DFCS custody. A county conference is held on each of these cases that provides a format for parents, foster parents, Guardians *ad litem*, grandparents, assigned caseworkers, supervisors and the children themselves to participate in and provide feedback related to case planning. Federally Mandated Determinations are documented for the Youth Court as a result of the combined administrative case review and county conference feedback by the Foster Care Review Staff and assigned county workers and supervisors.

#### Goals for the upcoming year include:

- Increasing the ongoing training and professional development of Foster Care Review staff;
- Providing and utilizing updated technology (laptops, data cards and webinar/teleconference) for FCR (traveling) staff;
- Active participation by FCR in Regional CQI teams and utilizing all PAD data for CQI Regional team assessment;
- Defining stable territories (workloads) for FCR staff;
- Continue to provide feedback related to the technical needs of the unit as it relates to the functionality of MACWIS and providing information related to needed enhancements within the MACWIS system that relate to the county conference, MYCIDS interface and Periodic Administrative Review tool; and
- Enhancing the format of the qualitative and quantitative data that is collected by the unit to provide a more comprehensive picture of practice and permanency for children in foster care.

### Foster Care Review Unit Accomplishments since 2009

- A second supervisory position was added to assist with quality assurance and oversight of the 18 foster care reviewers
- Data collection resulting from on-site foster care reviews was automated in the MACWIS system whereas in the past information was collected manually. The automated instrument is referred to as the Periodic Administrative Determination (PAD) and utilized by all FCR staff daily.
- Numerous PAD data reports have been developed as a result of the automation of the data collection tool (PAD) with ongoing data reporting under development. These reports help support MSA reporting requirements for meeting performance goals for child welfare data indicators.
- Tracking spreadsheets were developed to assist the unit with oversight of program functions such as scheduling of conferences, workload distribution, corrective action concerns.
- FCR staff have received ongoing staff development in an effort to increase consistency of data collection.
- Immediate safety, permanency and well-being issues identified from on-site reviews have been automated into a statewide tracking system available to senior management for timely follow up.
- Collaborative efforts have been made with other DFCS units such as Independent Living, Adoption and Resource Units to ensure ongoing cross training and sharing of knowledge.
- FCR staff have actively participated in federal reviews, state and Regional level CQI teams, Court Improvement, Evaluation and Monitoring reviews and various other workgroups.
- FCR training was developed and implemented statewide for all DFCS staff.

### Mississippi Automated Child Welfare Information System (MACWIS) Unit

The Mississippi Automated Child Welfare Information System (MACWIS) is the statewide case management data system utilized to manage and track foster care, investigation, prevention, and protection cases as well as resource homes. MACWIS tracks an average of 3,500 children in foster care and over 5,500 children that have been in custody at some point in the current fiscal year, pursuant to Title IV-E and Title IV-B of the Social Security Act of 1935, as amended. The system supports the work of approximately 1500 users within MDHS/DFCS.

In support of the MACWIS case management data system, the MACWIS unit serves as the DFCS Help Desk team working to assist in resolving computer software and hardware issues for DFCS workers statewide. The MACWIS unit consists of 17 staff focusing on the following areas of support:

#### MACWIS Help Desk Support

The MACWIS help desk support staff is responsible for all calls statewide from workers with MACWIS application issues. They resolve user issues, if possible, and also serve as liaisons to the MDHS Mississippi Information System (MIS) department in tracking MACWIS incident

reports that may result in call tickets to be worked by the MIS department to resolve user issues. As application enhancements are implemented, they assist in “testing” the application changes prior to implementation.

#### MACWIS Business Analyst Support

The MACWIS business analyst staff has been involved in many projects specific to the MSA. Numerous MACWIS reports were developed or modified as part of the *Olivia Y. Settlement Agreement Bridge Plan*. All of the reports were in production prior to September 2010 and are used by field staff and management to improve the quality of services provided to DFCS clients.

#### MACWIS Federal Reporting Support

MACWIS staff is responsible for reporting Adoption and Foster Care Analysis Reporting System (AFCARS) and National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) data to the Children’s Bureau.

#### MACWIS Validation Support

The MACWIS Validation staff support the validation of the MSA requirement of validation reports. The reports are on a 6 month rotation validation. Findings are reported to field staff for corrections, to the Training Unit for training of staff and to MIS for problems with the report.

#### MACWIS Hardware, Cell Phone, Scanning Support

The MACWIS hardware staff supports approximately 1,500 DFCS users with the maintenance, repair, replacement of all computer equipment at State Office and all DFCS county offices statewide. Equipment maintenance and inventory tracking of desktop computers, laptop computers, printers, Wyse terminals, wireless routers, and switches is part of the hardware staff’s daily operations. They also maintain all software on PC’s and Laptops.

The MACWIS cell phone support staff is responsible for distribution, maintenance, repair, replacement of cell phones and PDA devices to all DFCS staff. The number of DFCS cell phones fluctuates daily, but has been as high as 1,147 issued statewide and 66 PDA devices.

MACWIS scanning support staff is responsible for scanning all MACWIS reports generated from the mainframe system and distributed by the MIS Operations department. Approximately 290 reports are scanned monthly on a shared network drive for all DFCS staff to utilize. The current effort underway is to configure all reports to generate as .pdf format, emailed to the program area for distribution to eliminate the scanning of reports.

#### MACWIS Accomplishments

- Additional staff was added to support reports validation efforts. This consisted of one supervisor and three validation staff who validate lawsuit reports on a six month rolling schedule.
- MACWIS system enhancements have been incorporated in the current system to support the MSA, COA, and federal requirements.
- A multitude of reports were developed to support the division in gauging performance on key data indicators from the MSA. This effort consisted of a replicated MACWIS database designed on a SQL database platform. Reports were developed via Crystal

Reports software. These reports now serve as tools for the division in managing services provided to children and families.

- As part of a ‘Connectivity and Response Time Improvement Plan’, these accomplishments were made: 1) configurations to equipment, switches, cabling were made to all county offices statewide during 2013 and 2014. All switches were upgraded, some larger county offices were completely re-wired. 2) Work has been and continues to be accomplished to upgrade the Citrix environment to version Citrix XenApp 6.5. These efforts have and will continue to improve connectivity to the MACWIS system state wide.
- In 2011 Walter R. McDonald & Associates (WRMA) began a system alternatives analysis project. After several project phases to collect information across the division, the project was completed in June 2012. Based on the final MACWIS Alternatives Analysis Project as a whole, WRMA noted that Mississippi has three viable options for the replacement of MACWIS:
  - Major enhancement of the current MACWIS system with current technologies and functionality that corresponds to the desired technical and functional requirements defined during the Requirements Analysis Phase – this is essentially a rewrite of the current MACWIS system.
  - Transfer of an existing SACWIS system from another state ported to work on a technology environment consistent with the Department’s standards and the capabilities of the transferred system, and meeting the technical and functional requirements defined during the Requirements Analysis Phase.
  - Develop a new system that conforms to the Department’s standards, and meets the technical and functional requirements defined during the Requirements Analysis Phase by using a human services framework to correspond to the development or replacement of other systems within the Department.”

Understanding that MDHS/DFCS intends to replace MACWIS as a stand-alone system, the stated recommendation from the findings of the analysis project was transferring a system. WRMA further stated that the costs for implementation of a MACWIS replacement will be approximately \$40 million (\$2.7M for planning and \$37.3M for development and implementation). This includes staff, office space, equipment, hardware, overhead, and contracts. After implementation, on-going maintenance support will be approximately \$3M per year.

- In March 2013, the new SACWIS system project kicked off with the Quality Assurance/Independent Validation and Verification (QA/IV&V) vendor coming on site. Progress continues to be made as business flow review sessions, joint application design (JAD) sessions are held with management and division staff. Work on federal advance planning documents and requirements refinement continues as the division works toward the release of the request for proposals (RFP) to engage the design, development, implementation (DDI) vendor for the project.
- Staff has been hired to support the SACWIS project, inclusive of one Lead Business Systems Analyst, one Senior Programmer/Analyst. Additional staff are in the process of

being hired (one Lead Programmer/Analyst and one Senior Programmer/Analyst) and additional positions are in the process of being acquired to support this project.

#### CQI Data Reporting Unit (DRU)

During 2012 the DFCS CQI Unit developed a Data Reporting Unit responsible for reporting activities such as report trending and analysis based on all available data (i.e. MACWIS, EMU, FCR (PAD), SRU). This unit is still being developed, but currently consists of one Senior Business Systems Analyst supervisor, one Business Systems Analyst and one Program Manager. This unit also is responsible for reporting Adoption and Foster Care Analysis Reporting System (AFCARS) and National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) and National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) data to the Children's Bureau. The following accomplishments were made by this unit:

- This unit was instrumental in data analysis and reporting during the CFSR performance improvement plan (PIP). Partly as a result of the work from this unit and collaboration with federal partners, Mississippi accomplished passing all items from the CFSR PIP with a letter of accomplishment received during June 2014.
- PAD reports development was accomplished with assistance from DRU working with contract staff to ensure report specifications were accurate to meet lawsuit requirements.
- PAD report charts were developed for field staff to show regional progress for the PAD related data indicators.
- Analysis of NCANDS data was conducted as part of lawsuit reporting requirements. This effort resulted in a decrease in the state's maltreatment in care rate after resubmission of NCANDS data.

#### Complaints Review Unit (CRU)

The CQI program manages the complaints review unit. The responsibility of this unit is to receive and resolve all complaints on the behalf of the DFCS. This unit currently consists of one Program Manager responsible for all complaints activity. One Program Manager from the SRU is a back up to this process. The responsible Program Manager communicates and collaborates with Regional Directors, Supervisors and staff state wide as well as agency staff dealing with constituent complaints in a timely manner to respond to and resolve complaints. Complaints received are tracked and follow the same corrective action tracking process as the other CQI units. Reporting is available for follow up of assignments to ensure complaints are resolved efficiently, effectively and timely. Accomplishments of this unit include:

- Development of a new client satisfaction survey for the division to utilize.
- Collaboration with the agency constituent complaints team to assist in consolidating the complaints process across all agency divisions.

## **X. SERVICES FOR CHILDREN UNDER AGE FIVE**

### **Targeted Services to Find Permanent Families for Children under the Age of Five**

#### Recruitment and Licensing of Foster and Adoptive Homes

MDHS adopted a process of licensing all foster and adoptive homes as Resource Homes in 2008. All resource homes meet all licensure standards for both adoption and foster care. The resource families are taught in pre-service training that the agency's goal is "one child, one placement." As children ages 0-5 enter foster care, the agency works to place that child into a resource home. This resource family then works with the agency staff to assist in the rehabilitation of the family toward the goal of reunification. If reunification occurs, the resource family has been set up as a permanent support connection for the family. If the child is freed for adoption, the resource family usually commits to adoption and maintains some permanent ties to the biological family.

This agency was awarded the Diligent Recruitment Grant in 2010 and this grant has funded the agency's project of targeted recruitment of appropriate resource homes. The recruitment materials have all been redesigned to reflect the philosophy of resource homes which includes shared parenting, preserving permanent connections, and commitment to permanency. Though this project is designed to target resource homes for the older, special needs population of children, the information regarding resource homes and shared parenting gives the correct messages to all populations as they first hear about an opportunity to parent children in foster care.

Beginning in 2011 the agency began assigning an adoption specialist to each case that had adoption as the child's permanent plan or concurrent plan. By adding the adoption specialist to the case to work concurrently with reunification services, it ensures that the child is either in a permanent placement at the time of TPR or a permanent placement has been identified and prepared to accept the child by the time a petition for TPR is filed.

Further, the agency conducts weekly or monthly Adoption Status Meetings on each child with a permanent plan or concurrent plan of adoption. These meetings address any barriers to permanency, specifically barriers to adoption. Action steps are created each month with tasks assigned to specific staff to complete. By the time a child in this age group is freed for adoption, the finalization of that adoption should take place within 60 days, 90 days if there is a court issue.

#### Achieving Permanency

In 2012, 46.2% of children who entered foster care were under the age of five. DFCS policy requires that the child's age and developmental stage must be considered when developing the visitation plan for the child and his or her family. Mississippi uses concurrent planning regardless of the age of the child to facilitate permanency for children in foster care. Mississippi's family centered practice uses an approach to concurrent planning that involves the immediate and ongoing implementation of strategies designed to assure the healthy development of the child through a sense of continuity and connectedness. Services provided to young children in care include but are not limited to early intervention services, medical and dental services as well as immunizations.

In 2012, 59.1% of Mississippi's foster children exited care by reunification within twelve months. However, once adoption is added to a child's permanent plan an adoption specialist is assigned to the case and regular adoption status meetings are held. Weekly adoption status meetings are required for infants up to twelve months of age until permanency is achieved. In 2008 Mississippi adopted a dual licensure process for foster and adoptive resource homes. Resource families are recruited and trained to work with DFCS toward the goal of reunification and maintaining family connections. If reunification occurs, the resource family can act as a permanent support for the family. If the child is freed for adoption, the resource family often commits to adoption and is in a position to maintain some ties to the birth family. For children who are free for adoption but without an identified adoptive placement, Adoption Status meetings will be held monthly for children over twelve months of age and weekly for children twelve months of age and younger. Typically, by the time a child under the age of five is freed for adoption, the adoption finalization can take place within 60-90 days. Of the children adopted in 2012, 46.2% were under the age of 5.

*(Data is from the Child Welfare Outcomes Report Data on the Children's Bureau web-site)*

#### Resource Development for Five and Under Population

Resource Development continues to work toward enhancing the service array for children and families, and specifically for the five and under population through enhancing the percentages of the physical assessment within 72 hours of coming into foster care and 30 days for the comprehensive physical assessment and all follow-ups required; completion of mental health assessments within 30 days of entry to foster care for all children four or over to include any recommended follow-ups required. Dental exams for new foster children ages three and older are required within 90 days.

Foster Care Review-SPAD27m2: Report Period: 2/01/2014-07/30/2014:

During this report period, 67.57% of children turning three years old had a timely dental examination. (Foster Care Reviews occur every six months; these reports do not reflect the population of children who were not in custody for at least six months.)

#### Summary of Children Currently in Custody by Age, Race and Sex

DFCS tracks children in custody and their demographics through the MWZCCURS, Summary of Children Currently in Custody by Age, Race and Sex for the date range of XX/XX/XXXX – XX/XX/XXXX report. This is a standard monthly batch report. If requested, these data can be run for a specified time period. This report is designed to capture all children currently in custody from ages 0 and older. This report is also available by county with the same information.

Below is the report for October 1, 2012 through September 30, 2013, which indicates the demographics of children currently in custody under the age of five years old for that period as follows:

|              | White       | Unknown Race | Asian    | American Indian | Black      | Hawaiian | Total       |
|--------------|-------------|--------------|----------|-----------------|------------|----------|-------------|
| Male         | 555         | 15           | 2        | 4               | 473        | 0        | 1049        |
| Female       | 485         | 16           | 1        | 2               | 447        | 0        | 951         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>1040</b> | <b>31</b>    | <b>3</b> | <b>6</b>        | <b>920</b> | <b>0</b> | <b>2000</b> |

The total number of children in custody for the period October 1, 2012 – September 30, 2013 was 6495; 3206 males and 3289 females.

#### Training and Supervision of Caseworkers and Resource Parents

Training and Supervision of Caseworkers is provided through several means beginning with 270 hours of pre-service training and on-the-job training, which addresses age groups and time frames for comprehensive assessments, service delivery, reunification to occur or proceed to another permanent plan such as adoption or guardianship. Practice Model coaches are provided to assist workers with the Comprehensive Family Assessment, Family Team Meeting and implementing services to prevent removal or to facilitate reunification.

Resource Parents also receive Parents as Tender Healers (PATH) training prior to becoming a resource parent and DFCS policy outlines the protocol for preventing disruptions and providing respite services. Additional training is provided to resource parents when a child requires special medical treatment or higher level of care and supervision.

### **XI. MISSISSIPPI CHILD DEATH REVIEW PANEL**

Legislation establishing a Mississippi Child Death Review Panel went into effect on July 1, 2006. The statute provided for the State Medical Examiner's Office to have administrative oversight of the CDR panel. During the 2008 regular session of the Legislature, the Child Death Review Panel was moved to the Mississippi State Department of Health. With the move to the Department of Health, staff was provided to coordinate the activities of the Panel.

The Child Death Review Panel is composed of sixteen (16) members: the State Medical Examiner or his representative, a pathologist on staff at the University of Mississippi Medical Center, an appointee of the Lieutenant Governor, an appointee of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and one (1) representative from each of the following: the State Coroners Association, the Mississippi Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Office of Vital Statistics in the State Department of Health, the Attorney General's Office, the State Sheriff's Association, the Mississippi Police Chiefs Association, the Department of Human Services, the Children's Advocacy Center, the State Chapter of the March of Dimes, the State SIDS Alliance, Compassionate Friends, and Child Death Review Panel Coordinator, Mississippi State Department of Health.

The Review Panel reviews data related to infant and child mortality. The primary purpose of the panel is to foster the reduction of infant and child mortality and morbidity in Mississippi, and to improve the health status of infants and children. A listing of all child deaths for that quarter in the previous year is provided to the Panel Coordinator by the Dept. of Vital Statistics and disseminated to team members who can gather information from their prospective agencies and bring to the Review. For example, the representative from the Fire Marshall's office will bring information on the fire-related deaths. The State Medical Examiner will bring vital information. Medical staff who would have had oversight over the treatment of the children bring information and are able to interpret medical language found in the reports. Coroners' reports are collected by Panel Coordinator and are utilized in the Review. Dept. of Human Services takes the list from Dept. of Vital Statistics and compares with internal reports and investigations of child deaths to bring to the Review. The Team reviews deaths that occurred approximately one year prior so that all supporting information will be available for the review.

According to statute, the Child Death Review Panel shall submit a report annually to the Chairmen of the House Public Health and Human Services Committee and the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee on or before December 1. The report shall include the numbers, causes and relevant demographic information on child and infant deaths in Mississippi, and appropriate recommendations to the Legislature on how to most effectively direct state resources to decrease infant and child deaths in Mississippi. The State Department of Health is responsible for printing and distributing the annual report(s) on child and infant deaths in Mississippi. Recommendations for preventive strategies are made in the annual report to the Chairmen of both the House and Senate Public Health and Human Services Committees of the Mississippi legislature.

In 2011, the Panel implemented a data system obtained from the National Center for Child Death Review for collection and warehousing child death information received. Much information is collected on each child's death. The Panel continues to advocate with all agencies involved to receive more information from those on the front lines of scene investigation to fully utilize the capacity of this system.

The strongest information revealed from the data indicated that child fatalities from sleep-related incidents and motor vehicle incidents were the places where preventive efforts needed to be focuses. The DFCS Prevention/Protection Unit began the planning phase during this APSR reporting period which resulted in an extensive advertisement campaign for April 2013 and following to utilize prevention resources to combat sleep-related risks to children and motor vehicle risks for children with targeted public awareness campaigns.

#### Child Maltreatment Deaths

There were 12 child fatalities as a result of substantiated maltreatment of abuse and/or neglect in FFY 2013 (October 1, 2012 - September 30, 2013), as officially validated for NCANDS. There were seven child fatalities in FFY 2012, 13 child fatalities in FFY 2011, and 17 child fatalities in FFY 2010.

One use of Serious Incident Reports (SIRs) by Mississippi DFCS is to record and communicate among county, regional, and state levels regarding child deaths reported to the agency. This

information may come from medical staff, from law enforcement, or from any other source and brought to the attention of the agency. The information obtained from these SIRs are then utilized in the State Level Child Death Review Team's review of the case.

The worker is responsible for indicating (via checkbox) in MACWIS whether a child died as a result of maltreatment. Validation of this data is necessary to assure accurate data. Some reasons for validation are as follows: 1) All information on the child's death may not be available to the worker at the time of data entry, 2) Worker may not fully understood the criteria used to enter this data correctly, 3) What is believed to be fact during an investigation may not be confirmed by autopsy report, 4) A child's death may not have been reported through Mississippi Centralized Intake, but came to the agency's attention through Serious Incident Reports and inter-agency or intra-agency Child Death Review Teams. For these reasons, it is necessary to review the data entered regarding all child fatalities and to assure that the worker has made corrections accordingly.

Information from Vital Statistics on all Child Deaths is given to the statewide, multi-agency Mississippi Child Death Review Panel. That Panel, which includes DFCS representation, reviews the fatalities. One way Mississippi can improve in reporting all child fatalities is to compare the data at those reviews to the deaths already known to DFCS to determine if there are any children who died as a result of maltreatment but were not brought to DFCS's attention at the time of death. That information on the deaths of those children can then be included in the final, validated NCANDS report of child deaths for that time period if the information is provided in the current fiscal year. If the information is provided for a child death in a prior fiscal year, that information will be included in the NCANDS agency file. In this way, Mississippi can make sure that information provided through NCANDS is from all sources of information. Each year, the DFCS representative on the panel works with the facilitator of the panel to strategize ways to make the information as accurate as possible and to make every attempt possible to gather the data needed.

## **XII. CAPTA STATE GRANT**

### **A. Mississippi CAPTA Update**

#### Legislation

No significant changes were made to affect the state's eligibility.

#### Changes in Use of CAPTA Funds

No significant changes in use of CAPTA Funds since last update.

#### Use of CAPTA Funds

CAPTA Funds have been used to fund a portion of the Mississippi Centralized Intake Program and to fund a full-time DFCS attorney to review cases of maltreatment in care and special investigations. The funds being utilized in this way helps Mississippi to improve the child

protective services system in the intake, assessment, screening, and investigation of reports of child abuse or neglect per section 106(a)(1) of CAPTA.

### Populations at Greatest Risk of Maltreatment

DFCS relies upon compliance with the Miss. Code Ann. § 43-21-353 regarding mandatory reporters of abuse or neglect for notification that abuse or neglect is suspected. This statute requires attorneys, physicians, dentists, interns, residents, nurses, psychologists, social workers, family protection workers, family protection specialists, child caregivers, ministers, law enforcement officers, public or private school employee **or any other person** having reasonable cause to suspect that a child is a neglected child or an abused child to cause an oral report to be made immediately by telephone or otherwise, and followed as soon thereafter as possible by a report in writing to the Mississippi Department of Human Services.

On September 13, 2013, the State of Mississippi completed the fourth program year providing Statewide Centralized Intake Services. This call center serves as a central point of contact for reporting allegations of adult/child abuse/neglect and exploitation that is toll-free and available 24 hours/day, 7 days/week including weekends and holidays, and any other official office closing, with an assurance that all calls are received and handled effectively throughout the state.

DFCS receives, screens, and investigates allegations of child abuse and neglect, performs assessments of child safety, assesses the risk of harm to the children and evaluates conditions that support or refute the alleged abuse or neglect and need for emergency intervention. DFCS collaborates with the courts and community service providers to help stabilize a family in crisis and to help preserve the family when possible by reducing safety and risk factors.

The following are some indicators that children are at risk of maltreatment:

- Children in homes where domestic violence occurs
- Children in homes where substance abuse occurs
- Children in homes where parents need assistance in managing mental illness
- Children in homes where assistance is needed with behavior management/discipline
- Children with disabilities or with special emotional or health needs
- Children in homes where another sibling has been harmed
- Infants who are in unsafe sleep environments
- Children in open cases where maltreatment risks have been identified
- Children under the age of 5 years
- Children left in vehicles
- Children/ Youth who have run away from home or placement setting

The factors noted above are found to be potential indicators of risk in cases reviewed within our CQI process, cases reviewed due to fatalities, and cases brought to the attention of administration.

A combination of community awareness, agency awareness, and provision of services is being employed to target services to those families most affected by these risk factors. Indicators are relayed to advisory groups, such as Children's Justice Act Task Force and Children's Trust Fund

Advisory Board, to DFCS frontline staff, and DFCS administrative staff in order to strategize ways to match available resources according to the risks identified. This includes a collaborative effort among staff responsible for training, for developing resources, for implementing continuous quality improvement, and for implementing prevention campaigns.

### **Mississippi State Level Citizens Review Board – Review and Update**

On August 25, 2011 the Citizens Review Board met at the Mississippi Department of Human Services (DHS) with the purpose of making a formal transition to three panels, Northern, Central, and Southern. During this reporting period of October 1, 2011-September 30, 2012, three people were delegated as leads of the three panels. Efforts were made by the DHS staff to contact these delegates for information about the activities of the panels. These efforts were not successful.

In early 2012 DHS received communications from the lead of the Southern Panel reporting that they had not met yet in 2012 but had plans to meet in the spring. This panel had expressed interest in the policies and practices of DHS concerning unmarried couples and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) population with regards to being foster parents.

The Northern Panel focused on engaging fathers, recruitment of social workers and community resources, especially mental health services. This information was reported to MDHS in May 2012 and no further information was received.

The Central Panel was comprised of a few dedicated members with continued efforts in building a team. At their last meeting in April 2012 they developed strategies to increase membership such as utilizing the members of the Regional Implementation Teams, since the Regional Implementation Teams already include community stakeholders.

Due to personal and professional changes among the delegates charged with leading the panels, the Southern and Northern Teams disbanded in early 2012. As a result of the lack of participation described above the Citizen's Review Panel continues to operate under the same recommendations as 2011:

#### Recommendations

1. Continue to assist in restructuring three regional panels.
2. Assist the Citizens Review Board in the recruitment and support of panel members – notably from underrepresented sectors, such as business, direct service providers (e.g. foster parents), and past service recipients.
3. Include panel representation in planning activity related to the litigation settlement and accreditation. In particular, utilize specialized panel member expertise (e.g. regarding service expansion) whenever possible.
4. Assist the panel(s) in sustaining regular contact with appropriate agency personnel relative to Board priorities and concerns that may emerge over the course of the year.

### Update from June 2013

During a meeting between DFCS staff and the Children's Bureau staff in April 2013, it was discussed that MS is struggling with membership and direction for the Citizen's Review Panels and Board. Although Mississippi continues to have citizen review input through the Children's Justice Act Task Force, The Children's Trust Fund, and the statewide Child Death Review Panel, it was discussed that there is a need to explore other ways to achieve the outcomes desired from having Citizen's Review Panels. It was discussed that Mississippi may want to explore ways to engage stakeholders who have already shown interest in the work of DFCS through their participation in Regional Implementation Teams throughout the state, possibly even through participation in regional Continuous Quality Improvement Reviews.

Subsequently, the Prevention Unit met to strategize in June 2013. Plans were made to explore the following options to improve citizen's participation in review of DFCS:

- Form a Citizen's Review Panel consisting of former and current foster children. The Division Director of the Independent Living Unit would be instrumental in this plan, and could utilize the Youth Leadership Team to help with the process.
- The Children's Justice Act (CJA) Task Force, the Children's Trust Fund (CTF), and the statewide Child Death Review Team are already serving in the role of citizen's review for Mississippi. In order to maximize this effort, we will present to the CJA and CTF the process and intent for Citizen's Review Panels. We will explain that as citizens and stakeholders with representation throughout the state, their perspectives and opinions are very valuable to the agency. We would inquire to see if any members are interested in forming sub-groups to work on a project for a specified period of time or if they would like to work as a group and provide input. These groups are already provided with updates on the agency, but more effort can be invested in achieving input on the information given.
- Continue to use the statewide Child Death Review Team annual report to inform policymakers of changes that may need to be made for safety of children based on Mississippi child death statistics.
- Invite stakeholders from Regional Implementation Teams, Children's Justice Act Task Force, Children's Trust Fund, and statewide Child Death Review Panel to participate in Continuous Quality Improvement Case Review process by shadowing DFCS staff reviewing cases and by participating in meetings in which strengths and areas needing improvement for that region are discussed along with strategies for improvement.
- Continue to seek technical assistance from Blake Jones, and with any others recommended by Children's Bureau. Continue to participate in national meetings with other Citizen's Review Panels in order to learn about successful outcomes in other states.

#### Response to Citizen Review Panel Recommendations and Update on Goals June 2014

Mississippi has multiple entities serving as Citizen's Review Panels. Regular updates regarding the agency are given to stakeholders and community partners serving on the Children's Justice Act Task Force, The Children's Trust Fund Advisory Board, and Regional/County Practice Model Implementation Teams, with feedback for improvement being solicited. A Teen Advisory Board (TAB) is also being utilized as a way to receive feedback from those teens who are or have been served by the agency to provide feedback for improvement.

Mississippi DFCS has historically utilized the CJA Task Force, Child Death Review Team, and the Citizen's Review Board as citizen review panels. There were plans to create three teams throughout the state utilizing the schools of social work from three universities. However, the leaders of those teams from the Citizen's Review Board are now either serving in other areas or unable to serve in that capacity. As part of Mississippi's Practice Model implementation, DFCS has sought with success to include stakeholders and community partners in Regional Implementation Teams in the communities where they live and serve. This is where the stakeholders and partners are updated on the progress of the agency as well as strengths and needs specific to that area of the state, allowing for feedback, input, and problem-solving collaboration targeted to the specific characteristics of that area. As these are from the same community member pool who were being asked to serve on Citizen's Review Panels, it was realized that pulling them away from their local community involvement would be defeating the purpose, when the Regional Implementation Teams serve the purpose for the spirit and intent of the Citizen Review Panels. Mississippi DFCS is committed to the concept of engaging community leaders, citizens, and partners to join together to meet the needs of the community, within the supportive framework of state policies, resources, and collaborations.

#### **CAPTA Fatality and Near Fatality Public Disclosure Policy**

DFCS policy includes the provision that DFCS will adhere with the CAPTA Policy regarding public disclosure of fatalities and near fatalities due to child abuse or neglect. DFCS previously utilized the Serious Incident Report process for the purpose of communication regarding child fatalities and other serious incidents between the field staff and administrative staff. However, in further analysis of this process, it was determined that more clarity was needed to ensure that all near fatalities and fatalities due to abuse or neglect were captured, including provision of the CAPTA definition of near fatality in DFCS policy. Policy revisions have been made to require field staff to complete Serious Incident Reports on fatalities and near fatalities, thereby aiding in the collection of information on fatalities and near fatalities so that it is readily available when requested according to CAPTA guidelines. In the planning of the new SACWIS system, attention has been given to ensure sufficient data collection for fatalities and near fatalities.

#### **CAPTA Coordinator Contact Information**

Tamara Garner  
750 N. State Street  
Jackson, MS 39202  
tamara.garner@mdhs.ms.gov

## **B. Mississippi Centralized Intake (MCI)**

The State of Mississippi began its implementation of centralized intake in September of 2009 through an external contractual agreement with Social Work p.r.n. which provides the delivery of child and vulnerable adult abuse, neglect, and exploitation reports, referral services and disaster response plan. The call center is staffed 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, and its operational flow is not affected by MDHS/DFCS official office closings, such as weekends, holidays, or inclement weather. The contractor receives all information for reports made by county offices and the public through a toll free number or electronic reporting system. The information is documented into the DFCS computer system, and disseminated appropriately throughout the state or to other states per DFCS policy. The State of Mississippi covers a diverse geographic area, with over 84 child welfare offices statewide. DFCS is committed to continuing its efforts in delivering an effective centralized intake system that services the needs of its population.

Final Reporting on CFSP FY 2010-2014:

During FYs 2010-2014 of the CFSP, MCI identified deliverable, measureable outcomes to monitor the performance of its contractual provider for intake services. Nine outcomes were developed and deemed critical for the assessment and success of the MS centralized intake system:

**Outcome 1:** 94% of suspected child/vulnerable adult abuse/neglect reports are answered, entered into MACWIS, and screened to the appropriate county within 90 minutes of receiving the complete report.

**Status:** Over the course of the FY 2010-2014 Service Plan period MCI averaged a 75%-90% performance rate in this category. Barriers to achieving the 94% expected outcome are being identified, and interventions are currently being implemented to produce desired outcomes.

**Outcome 2:** 96% of reports pulled for quality assurance will receive a score of 80 or higher; with 100 being the highest possibility.

**Status:** MCI has continuously achieved the 96% expected outcome, with an outcome average 99% or higher.

**Outcome 3:** 98% of reports pulled for quality assurance will be screened in accordance to established statutes of limitations and policies.

**Status:** MCI has continuously achieved the 98% expected outcome, with an outcome average of 98% or higher.

**Outcome 4:** 98% of reports pulled for quality assurance will have confirmation of prior history attached or documentation of the lack thereof being available during the diligent search.

**Status:** During the FY 2010-2014 Service Plan period MCI averaged an 85%-96% performance rate for this expected outcome. Barriers to achieving the 98% performance goal are being identified, and interventions are currently being implemented to produce desired outcomes.

**Outcome 5:** 98% of resource home and child placing agency reports will be entered into MACWIS in accordance to policy with abuse/neglect history confirmed and tracked.

**Status:** MCI has continuously achieved the 98% expected outcome, with an outcome average of 98% or higher.

**Outcome 6:** 100% of new employees receive 40 hours of on-going training before duty and experienced employees will receive 20 hours of on-going training annually.

**Status:** MCI has achieved a 100% success rate in providing 40 hours of on-going training to new employees and 20 hours of on-going training annually for their staff.

**Outcome 7:** 98% of daily, weekly and monthly programmatic and fiscal reporting will be submitted in accordance to established timeframes.

**Status:** MCI has continuously submitted the required reporting in accordance to the documents requested. No measurement tool was established in the CPSP 2010-2014 period to identify a percentage calculation for this outcome. Action steps have been implemented to document and track reports and their timeliness.

**Outcome 8:** 95% of all calls will be answered with a hold time of five (5) minutes or less.

**Status:** No measurement tool was established in the CPSP 2010-2014 period to identify a percentage calculation for this outcome. Action steps have been implemented to document and track reports and their timeliness.

**Outcome 9:** 98% of suspected child/vulnerable adult abuse/neglect after hour reports are forwarded via telephone to the County of Responsibility on-call social worker within fifteen (15) minutes of screening.

**Status:** During the CPSP 2010-2014 period the social work inquiry telephone line was not being utilized for its intended purpose. Barriers to achieving the 98% performance goal are being identified, and interventions are currently being developed to produce desired outcomes.

**FY 2010 - FY 2013 through Federal Fiscal YTD 2014 annual data for Mississippi Centralized Intake of reports received for suspected child/ vulnerable adult abuse, neglect and exploitation.**

| <b>MCI HOTLINE REPORTS</b> | <b>Federal Fiscal Year 2010</b> | <b>Federal Fiscal Year 2011</b> | <b>Federal Fiscal Year 2012</b> | <b>Federal Fiscal Year 2013</b> | <b>Federal Fiscal YTD 2014 (10/1/2013 - 05/17/2014)</b> | <b>Cumulative Percentage</b> |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| Child E-Reports Received   | ----                            | 516                             | 2,062                           | 2,157                           | 1,339   | 2%                           |
| Adult Hotline Reports      | 3,363                           | 3,967                           | 4,068                           | 4,149                           | 2,446   | 6%                           |
| Child Hotline Reports      | 28,147                          | 31,790                          | 29,544                          | 26,462                          | 17,421  | 43%                          |
| All MCI Hotline Calls      | 40,320                          | 46,882                          | 47,399                          | 47,989                          | 30,834  | 49%                          |

Note: All MCI Hotline calls include: calls that produce adult/child reports, calls that require information and referrals, and any other calls answered by MCI that are not indicated.

**C. Children’s Justice Act**

Since October 1999, the Mississippi Children's Justice Act (CJA) Grant has funded the development of a Statewide Multi-Disciplinary Child Abuse Review Team Network (MDT). This project was in response to the need for the CJA Grant in Mississippi to address in a more systemic manner the handling of child abuse cases in the state. Until then, there had was not a coordinated effort by the CJA Task Force to implement a plan of action that could potentially affect the whole system of child abuse intervention statewide. The progressive establishment of a coordinated network of child abuse review teams, providing both a mechanism for improved multi-disciplinary cooperation and a means for ongoing specialized training and technical assistance, is the tangible vehicle through which this desired result is being achieved. Significant progress has been made and is ongoing in the realization of a statewide structure of the MDT’s which are reviewing reported cases and operating in a coordinated effort with other teams around the state.

Through the CJA Grant Funds, DFCS funded one contractor for the October 1, 2009-September 30, 2010 period, who worked under the administrative supervision of DFCS to accomplish the outcomes targeted by this endeavor. The subgrantee established expertise and experience in multi-disciplinary child abuse review team development and coordination garnered through prior efforts in creating local review teams in the service areas

In 2010-2011, MDHS funded two contracts through CJA Grant Funds. The contract period was for October 1, 2010 to September 30, 2011. The subgrantees, Family Resource Center of Northeast Mississippi served 59 counties in the northern and central part of the state, and The Child Abuse Prevention Center of Gulfport, Mississippi served 9 counties in the southern part of the state. Both are accredited Children’s Advocacy Centers with many years of experience in providing support for the investigation and prosecution of child abuse cases, particularly child

sexual abuse. Child Abuse Prevention Center of Gulfport, Mississippi focused on MDT's, forensic interviewing and training.

For the contract grant period of 2011-2012, the main focus of the Family Resource Center of Northeast Mississippi was providing services needed in 57 counties in north and central Mississippi and 5 counties in the south to improve the investigative, administrative and judicial handling of child abuse cases, as well as coordinating and or facilitating MDT meetings.

For contract period October 1, 2012- September 30, 2013, a Request for Proposal was solicited and granted to the Family Resource Center of Northeast Mississippi, to provide trainings to first responders and the maintenance and facilitation of Multi-Disciplinary Teams across the State. According to the reporting worksheets submitted by Family Resource Center of Northeast Mississippi, there were a total of 526 monthly MDT meetings conducted, which resulted in a total of 1,626 cases reviewed. The Resource Center indicated that there were 15 convictions by trial of felony child abuse and a total of 61 perpetrators entering into plea agreements. Administrative support was provided by the DFCS Prevention/Protection Unit.

CJA requires the State Task Force to undertake a comprehensive review and evaluation of the investigative, administrative, and judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect every three years and to make training and policy recommendations based on the review. A three-year assessment was conducted in 2012 by administering surveys to DFCS, courts, law enforcement, forensic interviewers, and others involved in the investigative process to evaluate the handling of cases throughout the system, including. Mississippi is scheduled to report on the Three-year Assessment in 2015.

During the years of 2009-2013, the following conferences, workshops, and other instructional activities related to handling child abuse cases were available to MDT participants, such as law enforcement, social workers, medical professionals, prosecutors, guardians ad litem, CASA workers, judiciary, mental health care providers, child advocates, and other professions who work with children (and families):

- Finding Words Mississippi
- Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner's Course
- Facilitation Orientation
- Advanced Forensic Interviewing: Issues in Interviewing Adolescents
- Extended Forensic Interview Training
- Victim Advocacy Training
- DFCS' Programs and Social Work Skills
- Spanish Speaking Forensic Interviewing Training
- Mentoring Forensic Interviewers
- Child Advocacy Center Management
- Child Sexual Exploitation Investigations
- Advanced Trial Advocacy for Child Abuse Prosecutors
- 27th National Symposium on Child Abuse (Huntsville, AL)
- 12th National Conference on Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Prevention (New Orleans, LA)

- Stress Management and Burnout Prevention
- Sexually Transmitted Infections
- Forensic Interviewing of Children Training
- Family and Victim Advocacy 101

### **Program Impact**

CJA clearly indicates that one purpose for these funds is for the reform of the state's child abuse case handling systems, especially as it pertains to child sexual abuse. Systemic reform is, and has been, at the heart of the Mississippi CJA program since 1999, with the initiation of the Statewide Multi-disciplinary Child Abuse Review Team Network project. Systemic reform is occurring at several levels in the manner of handling these serious child abuse cases.

- The dramatic shift in case handling approach means that more children can continue to benefit from the increased efficiency and expeditious handling of cases. Through the intervention of the Multi-Disciplinary Teams the likelihood increases that hundreds of children will be less likely to experience further traumatized by the system as it seeks to give them aid.
- The provision of specialized training to large numbers of direct line personnel had a significant impact on the system and its operation. As the individuals within the system change perspectives, the change in the system continues to be inevitable.
- The role of DFCS in the case handling system continues to evolve to encompass all the needs involved with the investigation and treatment of the children falling victim to abuse and neglect. Through the promotion of the Statewide Network and the multi-disciplinary process, DFCS has taken a new position of leadership in initiating change. In order for any substantive reform to the system to occur, DFCS must be a partner to the process, and in this case, DFCS is leading the process and calling on others to expand their endeavor. DFCS continues to increase the number of cases being presented to the MDT's. This is a direct result of the improved communication between professionals and the leadership role DFCS is taking on the handling of child abuse cases.
- The nature of the system continues to show signs of evolution with the emerging development of collaborative partnerships between various agencies. The continued, combined efforts have a common goal for the final objective: decreasing the number of children who have been abused and increasing the number of cases presented for prosecution. A view of the system encourages not just what is legally mandated, but what is necessary for the most complete attention to the needs of the child victim. This perspective is gaining validity and continued strides help develop a complete training program for forensic interviewing skills and a forensic medical exam center by parties outside of the CJA program.

## **Project Objectives**

Over the years of 2009-2013, the following Task Force Recommendations served as the main objectives of CJA.

- All pertinent state and local agencies and elected officials should take a more pro-active role in adopting and promoting the concept and philosophy of inter-agency participation in a comprehensive approach to child abuse/neglect investigation and management at the most local levels of involvement. Further, the state should seek to remove any barriers that would impede positive legislative, judicial, or executive action.
- Mississippi should continue efforts to develop and/or expand statewide membership in multi-disciplinary child abuse review teams for the cooperation and collaboration among agencies and professionals involved in the investigation, assessment, and disposition of child abuse/neglect cases in the state.
- Mississippi should continue to encourage the promotion and adoption of standard protocols and procedures for case handling to be used by all jurisdictions, so as to ensure consistent and appropriate efforts on the behalf of the child abuse victim and family.
- Mississippi should continue to provide ongoing training for the specific professionals participating in multi-disciplinary child abuse review teams across the state, in order to achieve a consistent level of competency and service for child abuse victims no matter their location in the state. Specifically, the state should seek training opportunities for MDT members to include: Trauma Based Therapy services and Operation Passport training.
- MDHS should promote CJA Task Force recommendations for reforms to state law as part of MDHS legislative agenda.

The CJA Task Force will continue to meet quarterly, make recommendations, and plan CJA activities. The state was advised that forensic interviewing would no longer be an allowable expense under the grant. Funds will also be used for the new Special Investigations Unit, which are specially-trained investigators improving the quality and consistency of investigating and improving the protection and safety of children.

## **Expected Results**

- The presence of active Multi-disciplinary Child Abuse Review Teams in 100% of the counties in Mississippi will lead to the inclusion of the District Attorney's offices acting in a more direct role in the multi-disciplinary process.
- A significant increase in the number of proficiently trained professionals investigating abuse cases through involvement in the specialized training opportunities for members of Review Teams. This exposure to a high level of specialized training will also have the potential to affect the attitudes of the participants regarding the efficacy of the multi-disciplinary approach and further reinforce its value and the need for participation.

- Reduce the intrusion of the involved systems on the child victim by lessening the number of overall contacts required due to the cooperative case management process.
- Improve the rate of successful prosecutorial outcomes by increasing the number of convictions by trial and increasing the number of pleas, thus eliminating the need for trial and child witness testimony, another reduction in system intrusion on the child victim. The combination of the MDT and Child Advocacy Center (CAC) could have significant impact on the prosecutorial outcomes for the counties with those joint services. Continued development of the Statewide Multi-disciplinary Child Abuse Review Team Network project will serve to further strengthen the state's system of child abuse investigation and prosecutions by increasing the number of teams, providing specialized training, enhancing the tools available to investigators and prosecutors, and seeking to involve all those with a direct responsibility in the handling of these cases.

Mississippi continues to make progress in accountability in the state's child welfare system. DFCS is working with the COA in order to successfully accomplish all goals in the MSA.

(See Appendix A. CJA Annual Report and DFCS Response)

#### **D. Mississippi Children's Trust Fund Advisory Council**

The Mississippi Children's Trust Fund (CTF) was created by the Mississippi Legislature in 1989. The primary purpose of this fund is to encourage and provide financial assistance in the delivery of direct services to prevent child abuse and neglect. The CTF Advisory Council function is to provide direction and recommendation on behalf of the Mississippi CTF. The by-laws state that the CTF Advisory Council will consist of thirteen members. Each of the following agencies is represented on the council: Mississippi Department of Health, Mississippi Department of Education, Mississippi Department of Mental Health and the Mississippi Department of Human Services. In addition, there will be at least one citizen representing each of the four congressional districts in Mississippi and the remaining four members will be citizens that are knowledgeable about child abuse and neglect issues.

MDHS is the lead agency and is responsible to the Mississippi Legislature for the CTF Advisory Council. In 2012, DFCS expanded the Prevention Unit, which took the lead on expanding and maintaining the advisory council's membership. The Children's Trust Fund Advisory Council was reorganized and the membership increased to meet the requirements set forth in the by-laws. The Council now has active representation from all required entities. A chairperson was elected and took charge of the Council. Advisory Council Meetings have been held quarterly in since 2012.

Funding for the CTF is provided by the collection of a one dollar (\$1.00) fee on each original, and copies of birth certificates and a \$1,000 fine imposed by the court on each person convicted of certain offenses against children. The Legislature approved a specialty license plate to sell with the proceeds going into the CTF. The plate has been designed and plans are in place to begin selling them in 2014. The CTF will receive \$24 from each license plate sold.

DFCS has continued to support child abuse and neglect activities including the Blue Ribbon Campaign and child abuse prevention materials for distribution throughout the year. The coordinator's salary is paid out of the Children's Trust Fund. A poster and note pads were designed, printed and distributed to the courts throughout the state to remind the judges to impose the \$1,000 fine and the court staff to correctly process the funds into the CTF. In 2013 CTF funds were used to purchase car seats for use by DFCS to safely transport children. In 2013, the CTF also provided funding for a large media campaign for Safe Sleep, Auto Safety and child abuse prevention.

In January of 2013, an RFP was issued. Two subgrantees provided services in July 2013. Starkville School District provided services to the community through the Community Café model. This is the first time this model has been used in Mississippi and was successful. The Exchange Club of Vicksburg was contracted to provide abstinence education, pregnancy prevention and mentoring services to students in Warren County and Vicksburg schools. They also created a curriculum for teaching caretaker skills to provide training to youth on probation and who are incarcerated in Hinds and Warren counties youth detention center. The Starkville School District contract will be renewed in 2014.

**Goal 1:** Sustain the Mississippi Children's Trust Fund Advisory Council membership.

**Progress:** Since 2012 the membership of the Mississippi Children's Trust Fund Advisory Council has remained stable with great attendance and involvement of the members. The members of the Council are vested in the mission of the Council and committed to the four year tenure.

**Goal 2:** Provide services through subgrantee(s) which will aid in the prevention of incidences of child abuse and neglect and promote public awareness campaigns.

**Progress:** For the first time in many years the Mississippi Children's Trust Fund provided funding for sub-grantee(s) who offer services designed to aid in the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

#### **E. Community Based Child Abuse and Prevention Grant (CBCAP)**

DFCS was designated by the Governor as the Lead Agency responsible for administering of funds and oversight of programs funded through the Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention grant. MDHS is a state-administered agency headed by the MDHS Executive Director, who was appointed by Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. The Public Assistance laws of Mississippi give the Executive Director the authority to make and publish rules and regulations for the efficient administration of the programs for which MDHS is responsible. MDHS is the primary link between families and the services needed to address their specific needs and delivers a broad range of services to a diverse population in a professional, accurate, and compassionate manner. DFCS serves as the state child welfare agency. Within DFCS, the Prevention Unit is responsible for leading the child abuse prevention efforts within the state and has the responsibility for administration and oversight of the Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) grant.

In 2013, CBCAP funds were used to secure 425 Pack-n-Plays (cribs) to be issued to needy families in Mississippi. A Memorandum of Agreement was signed with the Mississippi SIDS Alliance to issue the cribs as the cribs are requested by DFCS staff in the counties. When delivering the cribs DFCS staff uses that time to educate the caretakers about safe sleep practices.

**Goal:** Provide services through sub-grantee(s) which will aid in the prevention of incidences of child abuse and neglect.

**Progress:** For the period of 2009-2010 through the CBCAP Grant, DFCS provided a subgrant to Starkville School District for respite services and to the Gulf Coast Women’s Center for Nonviolence which provided respite services, child care, and parenting classes. A Request for Proposal was issued in 2010. In 2010-2011 Starkville School District was awarded a contract for respite services and the Exchange Club LIFE Resource Center was awarded a contract for parent education and Nurse-Family Partnership. The Nurse-Family Partnership component did not materialize and was removed from the contract by the modification process. Starkville’s contract was renewed; Exchange Club LIFE Resource Center’s contract was not renewed. In 2011-2012 Starkville School District was the only sub-grantee providing parenting education for teen parents or expectant parents, temporary and long-term respite care. A Request for Proposal was issued in 2012. Starkville School District was awarded a contract for 2012-2013 to provide parenting classes, respite, and home visitation for expectant parents and parents of newborns. Catholic Charities, Soloman Counseling Center was also awarded a contract to provide marriage therapy to parents with children less than 18 years of age, Prolonged Exposure Therapy or Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing Therapy and/or psychiatric evaluation to uninsured/underinsured adult survivors of abuse/trauma and domestic violence, transportation and interpretation services. Because of the success of these two contracts they were renewed for 2013-2014 and are in the process of being renewed for 2014-2015 as they are providing valuable, quality services.

CBCAP Participants 2012-2013

| Total Number   | Individuals (includes children and adults) | Families      | Parents with Disabilities | Comments |
|--|--|---------------|---------------------------|----------|
| Participants in direct services                                  | 1,811                                      | 664           | 125                       |          |
| Participants who received public awareness/ education (optional) | 15,350                                     | 10,000        | 1,200                     |          |
| Participants who received training (optional)                    | none                                       | none          | none                      |          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>17,161</b>                              | <b>10,664</b> | <b>1,325</b>              |          |

### Blue Ribbon Campaign and other Public Awareness

Mississippi's Governors have continued to be very supportive of the Blue Ribbon Campaign and have yearly signed a proclamation recognizing April as Child Abuse Prevention Month as well as recognizing the importance of child abuse and neglect awareness.

In 2010, DFCS hosted a press conference at the Jackson Medical Mall. There were several speakers and booths from other state agencies and community partners providing informational materials to the attendees. In April 2011, 2012 and 2013, DFCS organized and hosted a public awareness event at LeFleur's Bluff State Park to promote healthy, happy families during National Child Abuse Prevention Awareness Month. Other agencies and organizations were on hand to provide information on available programs, services and resources. The event is titled, "Picnic for Prevention" and families were encouraged to come to the park for information, food, entertainment and fun. DFCS has partnered with the Mississippi Children's Museum, LeFleur's Bluff State Park and the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science. The museums offered discounted admission for event participants. Entertainment was provided by the local school choirs and bands and religious organizations. Other divisions of MDHS also participated

In October of 2011, 2012, and 2013, the DFCS Prevention Unit, hosted a booth in the Trade Mart at the Mississippi State Fair. Informational literature, pens, hand sanitizers, bracelets, pencils and other branded items were given to the children and adults who visited the booth. Fair attendees were given brochures with parenting tips that had a blue ribbon attached and were asked to display the ribbon on their vehicles to show their support for child abuse prevention. According to the personnel from the State Fair Commission it is estimated that approximately 100,000 people each year went through the displays in the Trade Mart during the fair. Overall, public opinion was positive and receptive. DFCS will have a booth at the 2014 MS State Fair.

DFCS county offices were provided with Blue Ribbon supplies and they partnered with community organizations to hold Blue Ribbon events during the month of April 2014. All subgrantees were required to participate in Blue Ribbon campaign activities.

During April 2014, activities are held in various communities statewide to promote positive parenting, community involvement, early education and the expansion of state and community-based programs to reduce child abuse and neglect.

### **F. Maltreatment Case Review**

CAPTA Funds are used to employ full-time DFCS attorney to review maltreatment in care and special investigations. DFCS created the Special Investigations Unit. The Special Investigations Unit is responsible for investigating reports of child maltreatment that require special handling. This class of investigations includes any reports of maltreatment perpetrated on children in foster care, any child fatality or near fatality where abuse/neglect/exploitation is suspected, or any fatality or near fatality where DFCS was involved or had prior involvement with the child or family. In addition, the Special Investigations Unit conducts investigations that are deemed "high profile" or require extra discretion. The Unit will consist of a Bureau Director I and thirteen specially trained investigators. The Unit also receives support from staff attorneys assigned to the Special Projects Unit.

### **XIII. CHAFEE FOSTER CARE INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM/EDUCATION AND TRAINING VOUCHERS**

#### **A. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP)**

Independent Living Services are provided to foster adolescents, ages 14 to 21. In FFY 2013, there were approximately 1,247 teens in this age group, with 898 participating in the program. These services are designed to help prepare teens to live on their own as they leave the custody of the state. As teens continue to enter the program, they are given an assessment to determine the youth's strengths and needs. The Independent Living Assessment/Intake Plan consists of nine components that are required for teens to achieve self-sufficiency. The components are modified as needed to meet the needs of the 14 and 15 year old youth. Services are provided statewide and cover all of Mississippi's Congressional Districts. The state was divided into thirteen regions with an Independent Living Specialist assigned in each region. Two of the specialists are Senior Specialists with the responsibility of coordinating the North and the South regions. With the Chafee Independent Living Federal grant, DFCS added an Independent Living Specialist to the contract with the agency which provides Independent Living Services. The Independent Living Specialist is responsible for completing exit interviews with youths prior to their departure from the foster care system, sending out surveys, developing/building the After-Care Program, and tracking the data collected from returned After-Care surveys.

#### **Chafee Independent Living Services**

The Independent Living Program (ILP) helps adolescents acquire basic life skills in their progress from dependency toward self-sufficiency. Youth are eligible for Independent Living Services based on the following criteria:

- Youth in care, ages 14 until their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, are eligible for all Independent Living Services except for criteria placed on the Educational and Training Voucher program;
- Youth who leave custody, ages 18 to their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, are eligible for after-care services until their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday; and
- Youth who enroll in post-secondary educational and vocational programs may be eligible based on the criteria detailed in the Educational and Training Voucher (ETV) Program section.

All youth must have the opportunity to participate in independent living preparations without regard to the youth's permanent plan. Refusal by the youth to participate is not a valid reason for non-participation. All youth in care are eligible to receive Independent Living Services, based on the child's best interest. Some services are provided through a contractual agreement to include life skills training, retreats, youth conferences and other services deemed appropriate. The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indian Tribe youth are eligible for Independent Living Services based on the same criteria for DFCS youth in care.

Mississippi contracts the Independent Living and After-Care Services to a contractor whose emphasis on self-sufficiency is top priority. The CFCIP utilizes a contracting agency, Southern Christian Services Inc., which uses Providing Resources, Education and Preparation to Adolescents Reaching Emancipation (PREPARE) curriculum. The contract provides statewide Independent Living and After-Care Services to youth, 14 to 21 years of age, who are in the foster

care system and to those who transition out of the foster care system. The contractor provides sufficient staff to meet the needs of an anticipated 1,255 eligible youth. The program employs one Program Director, two Senior Independent Living Specialists, and seven Independent Living Specialists. The staff are strategically located throughout the State and assigned to each DFCS region.

The Independent Living Specialists employed by the contractor conduct Independent Living Skills Groups, which cover various topics for achieving self-sufficiency. These topics provide skills training, which is nationally recognized, Ansell-Casey Life Skills curriculum approved by DFCS, to participating youth based on assessments, personal contact, the Independent Living Plan Study and the Transitional Living Plan Study. The curriculum now contains eight modules. The titles of the modules are: Community Resources and Transportation, Communication Skills and Social Development, Employment, Money Management, Decision Making and Study Skills, Housing, Daily Living Skills and Self-Care. These modules address the five (5) areas of development identified by the Youth Development and Youth Leadership in Programs Organization. The five areas identified are Working, Learning, Thriving, Connecting and Leading. An additional module titled Youth Law Issues has been added. Knowledge of the youth will be measured by a pre-test at the beginning of each curriculum module. A component review (post-test) instrument will measure learning at the completion of each module. The results of the post-test will be compared to the pre-test given at the beginning of each curriculum component. The DFCS ILP has recognized key principles for youth to make a more positive transition to adulthood as follows: Positive Youth Development, Collaboration, Cultural Competence and Permanent Connections.

All youth, ages 14 to 21, are required to attend Independent Living Skills Retreats, which focus on soft skills, such as communication, and hard skills, such as money management. The retreats are coordinated by the Regional Independent Living Specialists and DFCS Field staff. Adolescents participating in the program under this section will also be participating directly in providing recommendations and designing their own program activities that prepare them for independent living. In addition, the adolescents are required to accept personal responsibility for living up to their part of the program. Efforts are being made to increase the number of youth participating in an active role to establish a more enhanced Teen Advisory Board (TAB). Though youth representation has been very strong in certain training events and various youth activities, there is a need to identify an increased amount of youth leaders to facilitate a Teen Advisory Board in order to provide the state with input and guidance on policy and programming. Currently there are 27 youth actively participating in TAB statewide.

**TAB Mission:** DFCS mission is to develop youth leaders within the foster care system. Teach responsibility and accountability by offering opportunities to represent and advocate for their peers.

Mississippi has 13 regions comprised of 82 counties. Three “Youth in Care” ages 16-21 will be selected from each region to represent their peers at the HOPE Forum by serving on either the state and/or regional Teen Advisory Board (TAB).

TAB meetings will hold discussions on issues, challenges and youth proposal presentations regarding improvements with the independent Living Program. There are two tiers in which youth may serve; the regional and state levels.

**TWO TIERS:**

**Regional TAB:** Three (3) youth (an elected State Representative, Chair, and Secretary) per region (39 youth total) will be selected by the IL Specialist and approved by the Strategies for Assessing Independent Living Services (S.A.I.L.S.) Board to represent youth in care for that region. Each region will meet quarterly to discuss any issues, questions, suggestions regarding foster care IL Services.

**State TAB:** Thirteen (13) youth will be selected by the Regional TAB to represent their region at the state level. These youth must meet with the regional board in addition to the annual state meeting while maintaining the selection criteria.

**CRITERIA FOR MEMBERS SELECTED AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL MUST BE:**

- Participants in the IL Program;
- Referred by their IL Specialist and approved by SAILS Board;
- Recognized as leaders, and doing well academically or the “most improved”;
- Open minded, goal oriented, have a positive attitude and good communication skills;
- Attend Life Skill Groups, Retreats and the Annual Youth Conference.

Progress reports of skills sessions are completed at the end of each of the eight curriculum modules by the Regional Independent Living Specialist and sent to the youth’s worker in the County of Responsibility (COR). Upon attaining 6 skills hours, a request is sent to the youth’s worker in the COR for entry in MACWIS, for the \$20.00 Skills Hours Stipend. Additional incentives are provided to increase the number of youth who participate.

**The following are some activities provided during the period of June 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012:**

| ACTIVITY   | PARTICIPANTS |
|--|--------------|
| <b>Independent Living Skills Group Sessions (1,086)</b>            | <b>898</b>   |
| <b>Independent Living Retreats (7)</b>                             | <b>258</b>   |
| <b>Computer Camp</b>   | <b>39</b>    |
| <b>Youth Leadership Conference Participants (June 06-08, 2013)</b> | <b>41</b>    |

Stipends are provided to the eligible youth as rewards for important life accomplishments. These stipends are provided for College, Newsletter Submission, Accumulation of 6 Skills Group Hours, Start-up, Senior Year Expenses, After-Care Follow-up Survey, Graduation/GED, After-Care Room and Board and Educational and Training Vouchers (ETV).

- Help youth receive the education, training and services necessary to obtain employment

In August 2005, DFCS held the first Computer Training Camp through a contract with Instructional Access, Inc. The Computer Training Camp provided training with state-of-the-art equipment to enhance the skills of those foster care youth and those who qualified for the ETV Program. An average of 35 to 40 participants attends Computer Training Camp each year. In August 2013, DFCS held its seventh computer camp. In addition to the newly funded ETV Program covering post-secondary educational needs and vocational programs, Mississippi provides the upgraded stipend amounts to assist youth as they transition toward self-sufficiency. The following stipends have been upgraded and/or added to assist with financial needs and encouragement to continue with their educational efforts, which will prepare them for better employment opportunities and better salaries.

- College Bound Stipend: \$300

This stipend is made available to youth enrolled in college, living on or off campus. This stipend can be used to furnish the dorm room or place of residence, purchase books/resource material, computer, or other needed items not covered by other funding, excluding clothing. In the past, this stipend was limited only to those youth who stayed on the college campus in the dormitory. However, past experiences show us that by limiting this stipend only to those who stay in the college dormitory may construct a barrier for some youth who are very much involved in the ILP and are attending college or vocational programs. During FY 2013, 24 youth received a College Bound Stipend.

- Community/College Graduation Stipend: \$100

This is a new stipend category which will be offered as a reward to all ILP participants for completing a two-year community college program and/or receiving a degree from a four-year college or university, or full completion of a vocational program. During FY 2013, 2 youth received this stipend.

- Start-Up Stipend: \$300

This stipend is an emancipation stipend to be used for purchases associated with the establishing of a home or place of residence. This stipend cannot be used for room and board expenses, utility deposits/utilities nor the purchase or maintenance of a car. During FY 2013, 35 youth received the Independent Living Start-Up Stipend.

- Pre-Assessment Stipend \$25.00

This stipend is available to all youth who complete a Life Skills Pre-Assessment form. The Independent Living Specialist will document the completion of the Pre-Assessment and will notify the COR Worker that it has been completed by the youth. During FY 2013, 149 youth received this stipend.

- Post-Assessment Stipend \$25.00

This stipend is available to all youth who complete a Life Skills Post-Assessment form. The Independent Living Specialist will document the completion of the Post-Assessment and will notify the COR Worker that it has been completed by the youth. During FY 2013, 3 youth received this stipend.

- Life Skills Training Group Stipend \$20.00

A \$20.00 stipend can be earned for the completion of six (6) Skills Hours. These skills groups are available through the Independent Living Specialist. The Specialist will document earned hours and will notify the COR Worker that the youth has accumulated the required hours. During FY 2013, 393 youth received this stipend.

- Youth Opportunity Training Stipend \$20.00

A \$20.00 stipend is available to youth that attend a Youth Opportunity Training. These trainings are planned through the Independent Living Specialist. The Specialist will document satisfactory participation in the training and will notify the COR Worker. No Youth Opportunity Training Stipends were received during FY 2013.

- Youth Conference Stipends

This stipend is available to youth for successful completion of participation in the Annual Youth Conference. During FY 2013, 27 allowances of \$30.00 were provided.

- Newsletter Stipend \$15.00

A \$15.00 stipend is available to youth who submit an article, poem or other creative writing, as well as a letter to the editor, or an editorial to the State Independent Living Coordinator for consideration for publication in any MDHS/DFCS publication. The youth may send the submission directly to the State Independent Living Coordinator, DFCS Placement Unit, and the COR worker will request the stipend. During FY 2013, no youth received this stipend.

- Senior Year Stipend \$350.00

A \$350.00 stipend is available to help defray senior/final year expenses for youth receiving a diploma, GED, or a Certificate of Attendance at the close of the school/program year in which the stipend is requested. During FY 2013, 52 youth received this stipend.

- High School Graduation Stipend \$100.00

A \$100.00 stipend is available to all youth in custody who receive a high school diploma. A copy of the diploma must be filed in the paper case record in the COR office. This one-time stipend is issued to the youth as a graduation gift to spend as the youth wishes. During FY 2013, 26 youth received this stipend.

- GED Stipend (General Education Diploma) \$100.00

A \$100.00 stipend is available to all youth in custody who receive a Certificate of Attendance, or pass the GED (General Equivalency Diploma). A copy of the certificate or diploma must be filed in the paper records in the COR office. During FY 2013, 29 youth received this stipend.

- Youth Trainer Stipend \$20.00

A \$20.00 stipend is available to youth assisting in various training activities. The State Independent Living Coordinator, based on recommendations from the Strategies for Assessing Independent Living Services (S.A.I.L.S) Advisory Board, will select youth. No youth received this stipend during FY 2013.

During October 1, 2012 through September 30, 2013, the DFCS incurred the following expenditures in the aforementioned areas:

| <b>SUPPORT SERVICES/STIPENDS</b>             | <b>NUMBER OF RECIPIENTS/ Services</b> | <b>DOLLAR AMOUNT</b> |
|--|---------------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>After-Care Survey</b>                     | <b>0</b>                              | <b>00.00</b>         |
| <b>After-Care Stipend (Room &amp; Board)</b> | <b>9</b>                              | <b>2,053.00</b>      |
| <b>College Bound</b>                         | <b>24</b>                             | <b>6,900.00</b>      |
| <b>Senior Year</b>                           | <b>52</b>                             | <b>10,610.49</b>     |
| <b>High School Graduation</b>                | <b>26</b>                             | <b>2,600.00</b>      |
| <b>GED Stipend</b>                           | <b>29</b>                             | <b>2,865.00</b>      |
| <b>Start-up</b>                              | <b>39</b>                             | <b>11,647.88</b>     |
| <b>Youth Conference allowance</b>            | <b>29</b>                             | <b>820.00</b>        |
| <b>Youth Conference Stipend (contractor)</b> | <b>41</b>                             | <b>4,100.00</b>      |
| <b>College Graduation Stipend</b>            | <b>2</b>                              | <b>200.00</b>        |
| <b>6 Skills Hour</b>                         | <b>393</b>                            | <b>7,905.00</b>      |
| <b>ETV Voucher (Federal &amp; State)</b>     | <b>1,033</b>                          | <b>373,028.41</b>    |
| <b>Personal Enhancement Stipend</b>          | <b>1</b>                              | <b>39.98</b>         |
| <b>Retreat Stipend</b>                       | <b>95</b>                             | <b>1,905.00</b>      |

Youth in care are provided personal and emotional support through mentors and the promotion of interactions with dedicated adults. The County of Responsibility (COR) Worker follows certain criteria before a youth is released from care including the youth has a safe place to live whether with others or alone; the youth has a means of supporting himself/herself after release; the youth has been notified in writing at least one month in advance that emancipation will be sought; and the youth has a mentor and/or resource family. The Worker identifies individual and/or family and then documents the information through the individual case plan. In addition to the mandates of the county staff, the PREPARE Program provides a pool of nine mentors for the ILP during their current contract period. In addition to these requirements, the Family Protection Worker will be mandated to give each youth released from custody the following:

- Independent Living Resource Guide
- Provide after-care services for emancipated youth until their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday (if needed)
- His/her original birth certificate
- His/her social security card
- Medicaid card
- Driver's license
- Educational Documents
- Original death certificates (if parents are deceased)
- Original documentation of citizenship or naturalization, if applicable
- Medical/immunization record
- Religious documents and information
- List of known relatives with relationship and contact information

- Previous placement information
- Passport (if applicable)
- Photographs (if applicable)

In an attempt to continue to increase the pool of mentors statewide, the contract was renewed with the provider (PREPARE). One of the scopes of services with the current contractor for 2012 was to recruit and establish a minimum of eighteen mentors per contract year. The Big Brothers/Big Sisters program is another group that assists with recruitment of possible mentors and role models. The State Independent Coordinator and the current contract provider met with the agency that hosts the Big Brother/Big Sister program for the State of Mississippi, which is affiliated with the National Big Brothers/Big Sisters program. Efforts are on-going to implement assistance from the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Youth Development (NCWRCYD) to explore other mentoring programs and transitional living plans. Workers, ASWS and Independent Living Specialists will coordinate with NCWRCYD and community resource agencies to ensure all applicable services are available and obtainable to assist youth in attaining and maintaining independence after release from agency custody.

Efforts continue to provide “job shadowing” opportunities in the work force through cooperative agreements with employers. Various marketing attempts are solicited through the NCWRCYD, Strategies for Assessing Independent Living Services (S.A.I.L.S.) Advisory Board and the contract provider, to best evaluate how this can be implemented. Youth, 17 years of age and older, are provided this opportunity. Family Protection Workers, ASWS, Independent Living Specialists and the youth are responsible for the implementation of the service agreements.

An annual Foster Youth Conference provides personal and emotional support to youth through various interactions with dedicated adults and mentors. The adults are Advisory Committee Members of S.A.I.L.S.; DFCS Staff; PREPARE Staff; and the different program presenters, which include former foster youth who have been successful in after-care. The Youth Conference for FFY 2014 will be held on the campus of the University for Women in Columbus, Mississippi, June 12-14, 2014.

**Transitional Living Plan (TLP).** The Transitional Living Plan (TLP) is a plan documenting how a youth will move from DFCS custody into other programs or to self-sufficiency. Within ninety days of the youth’s 16th birthday, or within thirty (30) days of coming into custody, the TLP shall be incorporated into the ISP. The COR worker shall complete on the IL Plan/TL Plan screen in MACWIS the youth’s post-custody living arrangement, means of income, educational/vocational training plans, food and clothing, health care, transportation, access to a mentor/Resource Family, and access to positive peer support. The IL Plan/TL Plan shall be developed jointly by the COR worker and ASWS, youth, and IL Specialist. The TLP shall be updated and modified as needed each time the youth’s ISP is reviewed and updated. Any tasks that need to be completed in order to accomplish the IL Plan/TL Plan shall be added to the tasks and goals under the ISP. Twelve (12) months prior to the anticipated release of custody date, the COR worker and Independent Living Specialist (contractor), youth, and Resource Parent(s) shall meet to determine services needed to assist the youth in preparing for his/her independence. During this meeting, youth shall be notified of any health, financial or other benefits that will cease after case closing. The COR worker should discuss with the youth a range of living

arrangements and engage him/her in an evaluation of the risks and benefits of each option. The worker should also discuss the availability of affordable healthcare options within the community. Child care options should be discussed with teen parents. The worker shall inform all youth transitioning out of care that they are eligible for Medicaid through age twenty-one (21). It shall be the workers responsibility to assist the youth with completing the necessary documents to continue Medicaid services and to ensure he/she has received a Medicaid card prior to transitioning out of care. As part of the Exit Interview form and for future reference, the COR worker will secure from the youth information on how he/she may be contacted upon leaving custody.

There is a Transitional Independent Living Plan component in MACWIS. This component captures various areas for continued assessment of the Independent Living Plan and the Transitional Living Plan. The Independent Living coordinator continues to receive assistance by the NCWRCYD to recognize barriers of the plan. Since DFCS has provisions for after-care services, effective October 1, 2004, youth who leave the foster care system no longer have access to Independent Living Skills Groups, Stipends, Retreats, Foster Teen Conferences, or Youth Track. However, these services are being extended for up to six months after release from care in an effort to move the youth toward self-sufficiency. A contracted After-Care Independent Living Specialist is responsible for developing a functioning after-care program that provides an accurate account of the number of youth eligible for emancipation, the number of youth that have completed pre-exit interviews, exit interviews and post-exit interviews where possible, the number that have left custody, the number of surveys mailed, the number returned and documentation of where they are residing, working, in school, incarcerated, etc. At the Teen Conferences, a Career Fair was set up with educational resources, employment resources and various other services available.

The PREPARE Resource Library contains numerous books, curricula, periodicals and videos relevant to the needs and issues of older youths. This is available and utilized when contact is made by former foster youth. A toll free (1-800) number is available for youth to contact Southern Christian Services for Children and Youth (SCSCY) staff when after-care services are needed or they can go to the DFCS Office in the county where they reside. The county worker will research the MACWIS system to verify that the youth was once in care and if they are within the eligibility period for the services requested. The After-Care Specialist and/or Independent Living Specialists will do a discharge interview with each youth when the youth is approximately 16 years of age, but prior to their 17<sup>th</sup> birthday. A follow-up discharge interview will be done at 18 years of age and every 6 months thereafter until emancipation. The After-Care Independent Living Specialist employed by the contractor for the ILP will conduct tracking procedures of the youth leaving care.

Information gathered from the Transitional Living Plan by the COR worker will provide initial information of where the youth plans to go after custody is released. An after-care survey will be given to the youth. A \$25 stipend for returning the survey has been established to provide added incentives. In 2011, there are fifteen participants in the Independent Living Apartment program. The ETV Program also provides additional support services to youth who are enrolled in the program prior to turning 21 for eligibility until age 23. A further description of this service program is explained in the ETV Program section.

The Independent Living Program makes efforts to coordinate the state programs receiving funds provided from an allotment made to the state under subsection (c) with other federal and state programs for youth (especially transitional living youth projects funded under Part B of Title III of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974), abstinence education programs, local housing programs and programs for disabled youth. The Youth Conferences included programs that discussed topics such as sex education, youth and the law and various other subjects. Other areas for coordination are the Regional implementation teams and collaborating activities with the Department of Mental Health. Efforts continue to include the Independent Living Specialist at various meetings and provide opportunities to coordinate with the PREPARE Program Coordinator.

DFCS continues to coordinate Independent Living services with federal and state programs to maximize benefits for foster youth. Representatives from each of the organizations listed above have been invited to take part in our focus group meetings and provide input on plans made with and for youth who are transitioning out of care. DFCS is requesting assistance of the NCWRCYD to help in efforts to obtain a service agreement with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to give priority housing for youth exiting the foster care system. DFCS staff, foster/adoptive parents and the foster youth continue to attend workshops, conferences, and other functions provided by the MDHS and community agencies.

Activities planned to enhance service collaboration include a number of approaches. Coordinating efforts include Southern Christian Services for Children and Youth (SCSCY) programs and various other relevant programs, such as Big Brother/Big Sister, CASA, and youth skills groups for the youth.

As a part of the Foster Care Independence Act (FCIA) of 1999, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) is required to develop and implement a data collection system to (1) track the independent living services states provide to youth, and (2) develop outcome measures that may be used to assess state performances in operating independent living programs. The data collection system is called the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD). Activities planned to enhance buy-in from youth and staff will include various approaches. Coordinating efforts include SCSCY programs and ongoing training for youth in care, administrative staff, and direct service staff.

#### National Youth in Transition Database

The National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) was developed and implemented on October 1, 2010. Data was collected and transmitted to ACF in May 2011. DFCS has not requested technical assistance from outside organizations. The Independent Living Unit, Management Information System (MIS) and the MACWIS Unit work together to make any changes/additions necessary to meet the Federal reporting requirements. The information required for the youth served population is extracted from MACWIS and the survey for the baseline and follow-up populations is web-based. Mississippi Information Systems (MIS) created a web portal for the survey allowing it to be web-based with a direct link to MACWIS in order to extract the data to be reported. The survey was also available in a paper format for youth without computer access or who needed assistance.

The paper surveys were completed and sent to the Independent Living Unit for entry into the web portal for later extraction. Once the data mapping and extraction plans were developed, a marketing strategy was created and implemented by developing a daily list of eligible youth to contact for participation. This list included: youth's name, date of birth, person ID number, County of Service, County of Responsibility, region and social worker. The list was sent to the Independent Living Unit and MACWIS, where it was scanned to the public drive accessible to all DFCS staff.

The Independent Living Unit conducted state-wide NYTD training for county staff and contractor staff to ensure maximum staff knowledge and participation in the data collection process. Letters were mailed to the resource parents and residential group home staff of eligible youth outlining the purpose of NYTD and the correct procedures to complete the survey. Contractor staffs were equipped with flyers and brochures to disseminate to youth during skills groups and retreats. The eligible youth were contacted by contractor staff, county staff and the Independent Living Unit's staff to inform them of their role in NYTD and time frame in which to complete the survey.

The first baseline survey was submitted to the ACF portal with a penalty assessed for not meeting the compliance standards for data element 35. Data element 35 refers to the 45 day time frame in which a youth must complete the survey. Penalties are assessed to data submitted on youth who did not complete the survey in the 45 day period. After a discussion ACF, it was determined that the DFCS system was using the date the information was entered into the web portal as the survey date as opposed to the actual date the survey was completed. Adjustments were made to the state NYTD portal to capture the actual survey date and a corrected file was submitted to ACF which met the compliance standards with no penalty assessed.

The Mississippi NYTD 2013 A Served Population and Follow-Up Population files were submitted to ACF on May 7, 2013. The files met the reporting requirements and were in compliance. The NYTD 2013 B Served Population and Follow -Up Population files were submitted November 14, 2013.

Modifications were made to the Mississippi NYTD survey portal to capture the date the survey was administered to the youth instead of capturing the date the information was entered into the portal. This will allow DFCS to capture and report correct data to ACF. The Follow-Up survey also had to be modified to meet ACF reporting requirements. These requirements included the addition of specific questions related to data elements 42, 43, 44, 49, 50, 51, and 52. All modifications were made and meet ACF requirements.

Mississippi sent three staff (IL Director, NYTD Coordinator, and MACWIS Business Analyst) to the NYTD Technical Assistance Conference in Washington DC the week of August 7-10, 2012. Staff had the opportunity to review the data captured and submitted by all states during the first NYTD file submission reporting period. The conference also provided information about engaging youth in the upcoming Follow-Up Population survey as well as how to use the captured data to better serve youth.

The Independent Living Unit provides continuous NYTD training and instruction to DFCS staff, contractor staff and community stakeholders through training classes and NYTD informational pamphlets and brochures. New DFCS county staff receive NYTD instruction during intensive training. NYTD was added to the Independent Living Training Curriculum to ensure it is fully incorporated into the Independent Living Program.

The responses captured during the Baseline and Follow-Up Population Surveys were compiled and posted on the Mississippi NYTD portal. This data is used to identify the needs expressed by the youth. Once the needs are identified, the Independent Living Curriculum is modified to address the needs expressed by the youth. The data captured through the surveys allows DFCS to provide services to youth based on their personal experiences, which better prepares them for successful transition to independence.

### **Outcome**

The data collected from the baseline population was compiled to evaluate the services offered through the Independent Living Program. This compilation allows knowing first-hand what the youth are experiencing and to make modifications to ensure that the state Independent Living Program is meeting the needs of youth transitioning into independence. This information will also be shared with other DFCS state and county staff, contractor staff, youth, resource parents, residential group home staff and other state partners to promote a more collaborative effort in preparing foster youth to successfully exit custody.

The NYTD implementation was a long tedious process, but it was created, developed and executed in-house to alleviate over budget spending and full creative control to best serve staff and youth. The tracking process continues through a database of baseline youth who participated in the initial survey. The conception of NYTD was successful and DFCS plans to continue making progress to track more youth and collect additional data in the future.

NYTD Goals:

- Maintain contact with eligible youth through Independent Living Skills Groups, email (if available), mail and telephone.
- Informational brochures and pamphlets have been created for youth, workers, group home staff, contract staff, and resource parents.
- Capture 60% out-of-care youth participation and 80% youth-in-care participation.
- Structure the Independent Living Program to meet the needs of the youth served. The NYTD responses allow meeting the needs directly expressed by the youth.

### **S.A.I.L.S. Advisory Board**

In addition to the contracting agency, the CFCIP has structured the S.A.I.L.S. Advisory Board and is made up of the State Independent Living Coordinator, two DFCS Staff members from each of the thirteen regions in the State, the PREPARE Program Director, Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians representatives and youth-in-care teen leaders. Efforts continue to ensure youth are represented at the S.A.I.L.S. meetings. Youth participating in the program under this section participate directly by providing recommendations and designing their own program activities to

prepare them for independent living. Further, the youth are required to accept personal responsibility for their part of the program.

**Training conducted during FY 2013 and planned for FY 2014, in support of the goals and objectives of the States' CFCIP.**

The Independent Living Program in conjunction with the DFCS Training Program has incorporated the Independent Living Training curriculum into the DFCS Intensive Training Curriculum offered to staff. Independent Living training has also been added to the foster and adoptive parent training held during the year and incorporates information that addresses adolescent issues. This training curriculum is provided to all foster and adoptive parent training classes conducted statewide. This training is designed to help foster parents, adoptive parents, group home staff, and case workers better understand issues confronting adolescents who are trying to achieve self-sufficiency.

The S.A.I.L.S. Advisory Board, PREPARE program, and selected foster parents and DFCS Independent Living staff attended the 2011 "*Lookin' to the Future*" Conference. The conference hosted representatives from SCSCY and presented the Independent Living and Educational Training Voucher Program to resource parents and DFCS staff. This continued the effort to educate youth on the four principles the DFCS Independent Living Program has recognized as crucial in the transition to adulthood process: Positive Youth Development, Collaboration, Cultural Competence, and Permanent Connections.

Collaboration with the NCWRCYD has been established and efforts continue to assess areas in need of further training topics. The Independent Living Training Curriculum is scheduled to be presented in conjunction with the Intensive Training Curriculum which conducts training sessions throughout the year. Plans have been discussed for the Independent Living Coordinator to be included in the DFCS regional meetings to incorporate training on the Independent Living Plan, with an emphasis on the ETV program.

**Trust Fund Program**

The DFCS Independent Living Program has opted not to participate in the service design and delivery of the trust fund program. To date, the DFCS Independent Living Program does not have a trust fund process set up for eligible youth leaving care. Youth are eligible for numerous stipends, including a \$300.00 Start-up Stipend upon being emancipated or leaving state custody.

**Involving youth (up to age 21) in state agency efforts such as the CFSR/PIP process, agency improvement planning efforts, or others.**

The DFCS Independent Living Program continues to make efforts to increase youth involvement with agency efforts with regard to the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) and Program Improvement Plan (PIP) process. One area is through the youth advisory board, Teen Advisory Board (TAB). TAB is a youth advisory group consisting of members who are participating in the Independent Living Program. Meetings are held quarterly for the youth to discuss improvements or challenges with the Independent Living Program. Though this area has been challenging, efforts continue to determine the best way to structure this Board. Plans are in place to seek further information to improve this process, such as allowing youth to express ideas and concerns through different lines of communication, like TAB. One area utilized is the Life Skills

Groups. When youth attend their skills groups, they are able to network with other youth and also the Independent Living Specialist. The information obtained from the youth during the skills groups is forwarded to the PREPARE Director to share with the State Independent Living Director to coordinate efforts to assess the overall functionality of the program. The S.A.I.L.S. Advisory Board continues to meet regularly and plans to continue holding monthly to quarterly meetings in the continuation of assessing the Independent Living Program. In the past, youth have attended some of the meetings and efforts will continue to increase the number of youth attending the S.A.I.L.S. meeting.

Other lines of communication include the monthly retreats held throughout the year and the yearly conferences held during the summer months. The retreats and conferences allow an opportunity for youth to come together and attend the scheduled sessions, but also, time is scheduled for the HOPE Forum. This allows youth to continue to express their views of the Independent Living Program which enhance the program. The plan is to encourage more youth involvement in the CFSR and PIP process.

**Expansion of Medicaid to provide services to youth, ages 18 to 26 years old, who have aged out of foster care.**

Foster youth who leave custody in Mississippi on or after their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, but who have not yet reached age 21, under certain criteria, are granted Medicaid coverage through the month in which they become 21 years of age without regard to their income or resources. Foster youth may receive this coverage if they were in a licensed placement prior to leaving care. This continued coverage has been in effect since July 1, 2001. The coverage of foster youth who leave foster care continues to be implemented by the Division of Medicaid (DOM) as follows: when DFCS sends a Medicaid end date on a foster youth who is age 18 or greater, but less than age 21, the DOM bypasses the end date and locks the individual into continuous Medicaid coverage to age 26; the youth is issued a letter from DOM that specifies continuous coverage to age 26; the notice/letter is sent to the county DFCS office address and the worker ensures that the foster youth receives the notice.

Foster youth are informed of the continued coverage in order to fully benefit from this After-Care Service. The plastic Medicaid ID card issued to the youth while in care remains active for use. The county worker must make sure that the Medicaid card is given to the youth upon release from custody. Medicaid eligibility will continue for the youth until age 21 unless the DOM is notified of the need to end eligibility earlier due to a move out of State, death of the individual, or a long-term admission to a public institution. The notification of any of these terminating events is the responsibility of the county worker or other DFCS designee.

**Indian Tribe consultation (Section 477(b)(3)(G) of the Act) specifically as it relates to determining eligibility for benefits and services and ensuring fair and equitable treatment for Indian youth in care:**

The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians is the federally recognized Indian Tribe in the State of Mississippi and the repository for tribal membership in other tribes. Native American youth are eligible for Independent Living Services based on the same criteria for DFCS youth in care. A representative from the Choctaw Tribe participated in the S.A.I.L.S. Advisory Board during FFY 2013. The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians was invited to attend the annual teen

conferences, teen retreats and SCSCY's 2012 "Lookin' to the Future" Conference, held in Natchez, Mississippi. Choctaw representatives participated in the Five-Year Strategic Planning Conference in February 2013.

The NCWRCYD provided technical assistance for the Independent Living Program and many areas were identified for growth of the program. The consultation was documented and implemented toward the development of the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP). The Independent Living Program incorporates areas that ensure eligibility determination for benefits and services, which includes fair and equitable treatment for Native American youth who are identified in Mississippi.

Under the Chafee Foster Care Independence Act of 1999, P.L. No. 106-169, signed by the President on December 14, 1999, States were given the option to extend Medicaid coverage to youth ages 18 to 21, who were in foster care on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. The criteria and procedures apply only to youth who are receiving foster care IV-E or Child Welfare Services (CWS) Medicaid at the time they leave DFCS custody on or after their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. Foster youth who receive Medicaid or health benefits under other categories such as SSI, TANF, Economic Assistance, CHIPS, and Regional Medicaid will not be in the category for the automatic continuous Medicaid coverage up to age 21. Those individual programs will determine eligibility for continued coverage. The main criterion for determining eligibility is to make certain the youth identified meet the requirements described by the CFCIP.

DFCS does not discriminate on the basis of race, age, sex, religion or national origin. All benefits will be equally distributed across the board solely based upon the age of the youth and by custody of DFCS or the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. Eligible recipients must be participating in the Independent Living Program activities and have an Independent Living and /or Transitional Living Plan that has been developed based upon input by the youth. Monthly reports are generated through MACWIS and are provided to the Independent Living Specialists as their case loads. The Foster Care Review Unit reviews all Individual Service Plans (ISP) every six months and alerts the Placement Unit if no documentation of Independent Living services is being provided. The names of youth identified are referred to the Independent Living Specialists for Independent Living services.

MDHS has established the Program Integrity Unit, which conducts periodic evaluations of programs. The Independent Living Program along with the Program Integrity Unit will enforce standards and procedures to prevent fraud and abuse in the programs carried out under the plan.

#### **B. Education and Training Vouchers (ETV)**

The ETV Program enacted in 2001, and administered through the State child welfare agency provides Mississippi with supplemental resources to meet the educational and training needs of youth aging out of foster care including post-secondary educational and vocational programs. This program makes vouchers of up to \$5,000 per year available to eligible youth attending institutions of higher education. This includes youth who have left foster care because they attained 18 years of age but have not yet attained 21 years of age; youth likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age, commensurate with the State criteria used to determine eligibility for the program; and former foster care recipients, age 21 and younger. Students participating in the

voucher program at age 21 and making satisfactory progress toward completing their course of study or training may continue up to age 23. Mississippi will provide vouchers to youth who are adopted from foster care after age 16 but have not yet reached 21 years of age. The state will comply with the ACF Program Instruction that explains the CFCIP and ETV Programs by the implementation of the plan. Various description of methods have been described to ensure that the total amount of educational assistance to a youth under this program and any other Federal assistance program does not exceed the total cost of attendance. DFCS will strive to ensure and avoid any duplication of benefits under this and any other Federal assistance program.

During the first year of implementation of the Chafee Educational and ETV Program, there were several barriers that resulted in Mississippi not utilizing the federally allocated funds. The following barriers were identified:

- Time required of workers in completing the process and not enough workers;
- Application and approval process is cumbersome; and
- Ineffective marketing of the ETV program.

To maximize these funds for youth, DFCS enlisted technical assistance from the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Youth Development (NCWRCYD). To improve the use of ETV funds, the technical assistance targets the following areas:

- Strategies to more effectively administer the State's ETV funds;
- Clarification of "allowable expenses" as defined by the Higher Education Act of 1965; and
- Mississippi ETV application, approval, and award process.

The following strategies were implemented:

- Enlisted SCSCY services to assist youth with the application process to decrease the time required of DFCS social workers;
- Eliminate unnecessary steps in the ETV application approval and award allocation process; and
- Provided information on the ETV program to all interested parties including youth in care, foster and adoptive parents, group homes, residential facilities, mentors, stakeholders, secondary and post-secondary educational institutions.

The State Independent Living Coordinator attended various meetings to market the ETV Program in which youth were present and had the opportunity to discuss the ETV procedures and application process. The board meeting with the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) included representatives from the courts, Attorney General's Office and other helping professions. Various questions were asked and responded to of the possibilities of using ETV funds.

Mississippi's plan is to continue to use the assistance of SCSCY, along with DFCS staff to assist in identifying youth who are eligible for the ETV funds. The services of the PREPARE Independent Living Specialists to assist eligible youth with the ETV application process have been included in the Scope of Services. The plan for the new ETV approval process was shared

with the DFCS Director, the Regional Directors, and all State Office Unit Directors. The State Independent Living Coordinator provided an in-service training, question and answer session on the revised ETV process with the PREPARE Program Director, the two Senior Independent Living Specialists, and the Independent Living Specialists. The revised ETV Process has been well received by all.

The revised ETV approval process is as follows:

- Independent Living Specialists will assist in identifying eligible youth;
- The Independent Living Specialists coordinate financial aid application/packet with youth Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FASFA), Mississippi Tuition Assistance Grant (MTAG), Institution);
- The youth must first apply for and have received confirmation and/or disapproval notices from applications made for the Pell Grant, MTAG, scholarships, or other grants for which the youth may have applied. The Independent Living Specialist must also factor in the sources and amounts of any other funds that may be available to the youth;
- The Independent Living Specialists coordinate ETV application with youth and sends application to the COR worker and ASWS for signature;
- Upon obtaining signatures the Independent Living Specialists send ETV application to State Independent Living Coordinator for review;
- The State Independent Living Coordinator sends the ETV notification to the DFCS Administration Unit Director to ensure the COR has ample State Funds in the MACWIS report for the county to select an Education and Training Voucher Support Service;
- The State Independent Living Coordinator notifies (by phone or e-mail) the COR worker to expedite notice to enter the ETV support service request in MACWIS by selecting the Education and Training Voucher Support Service;
- COR worker enters the ETV request in MACWIS; A tickler (electronic notification) is received by the ASWS to review/approve the ETV request in MACWIS;
- A tickler (electronic notification) is sent to the State Independent Living Coordinator;
- The State Independent Living Coordinator reviews/approves the ETV request in MACWIS;
- The ETV tickler (electronic notification) goes to the COR bookkeeper to be expedited;
- The COR bookkeeper prepares payment for the approved ETV Support Service provider (vendor or youth).

While the ETV application approval process has been revised, additional assessments of the process are still needed to improve timely approval. The National Resource Center for Youth Development (NRCYD), the S.A.I.L.S. Committee and the State Independent Living Coordinator are collaborating to identify steps that can be taken to further reduce barriers for timely application approval. Strategies already in place to accomplish this task include the following:

- The SCSCY contract renewal was modified to include a revised scope of services based on the assistance with the application process.

ETV funds are used to assist foster youth and former foster youth with funds to successfully transition toward self-sufficiency. The availability of the funds will empower DFCS staff with the bargaining tools to encourage youth to attend college or vocational training schools. Ninety-

three youth received ETV funds in 2012. The expected outcomes of maximizing the ETV funds are the:

- Youth will be able to enroll and complete postsecondary and vocational programs;
- Youth will be more marketable and able to broaden the spectrum of job opportunities;
- Youth will be able to afford better housing and transportation;
- Youth will be able to be more self-sufficient; and
- Youth will have an opportunity to break the cycle of dependency on the state.

Mississippi's plan is to expand the ETV funds by:

- Assisting with room and board for youth attending college;
- Assisting with enrolling eligible youth into a computer camp for training on computer skills;
- Purchasing computers for youth participating in the ETV Program;
- Assisting with child care vouchers;
- Assisting with travel expenses to include insurance payments;
- Continuing to explore assistance with car insurance (liability);
- Assisting with membership to school related organizations;
- Assisting with preparatory test and study materials; and
- Providing payments for travel expenses incurred when going home for holidays or vacations, or payments for other housing when the college dormitories are closed.

SCSCY's June 2013 "*Lookin' to the Future*" Conference served as a forum to educate Independent Living Specialists and foster/adoptive parents attending the Independent Living technical assistance sessions. Those attending the conference included the DFCS State Independent Living Coordinator, selected S.A.I.L.S. Advisory Board members, the PREPARE Independent Living Specialists, the PREPARE Program Director, foster and adoptive parents from the thirteen regions. Representatives from the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians were invited to attend. DFCS Independent Living Coordinator provided Independent Living and ETV sessions to increase growth in the areas of positive youth development, creative life skills training, transitional outreach programs, becoming a responsible teen, working together for successful youth transition, and the law.

The State Independent Living Director attended regional staff meetings to provide ETV training to ASWSs about the revised application and approval process. The Independent Living Specialists were invited and attended scheduled foster/adoptive parent training. This enabled the Independent Living Specialists to discuss with the foster/adoptive parents the ETV application and approval process for youth in their care. A reassessment of the contractual scope of services was completed by July 2013 and will continue annually.

The following eligible individuals will be considered for ETV:

- Youth currently in the foster care system;
- Youth who have left foster care because they attained 18 years of age, and have not yet attained 21 years of age;
- Youth who were adopted at age 16 and have not yet attained 21 years of age;

- Youth who graduate from high school, receive a GED, or a certificate of attendance; and
- Students must have participated in the ETV Program prior to their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday in order to continue receiving ETV funds until age 23.

Before the ETV funds can be considered, the COR worker, PREPARE, Independent Living Specialists and/or the youth must first apply for and have received confirmation and/or disapproval notices from applications made for the Pell Grant, MTAG, scholarships, or other grants for which the youth may have applied. The Independent Living Specialist must also factor in the sources and amounts of any other funds that may be available to the youth. Mississippi will use ETV funds to supplement expenses not covered in the youth's financial award package up to \$5,000 per year. The funds may be applied for annually or by the time frame of the institution of higher learning or vocational program the youth is enrolled in that shows completion of a semester or term. Funds will be applied for on the following criteria:

- Enrolled in an institution of higher education, as defined by the Higher Education Act of 1965:
  - Awards a Bachelor's Degree or is not less than a two-year program (Associate's Degree) that provides credit toward a degree; or
  - Provides not less than one year of training toward gainful employment; or
  - Is a vocational program that has been in existence for at least two years and provides training for gainful employment.
- In good standing with the college, university or vocational training school;
- Maintaining a grade point average of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale;
- If grade point average is below a 2.0, the youth has one semester to reestablish a 2.0 grade point average;
- Making progress toward completing the programs in which they are enrolled; and
- Priority will be given to full time students in the event of ETV funding depletion in any federal fiscal year.

A worker who receives an ETV request from a youth out-of-care and eligible for the ETV program shall complete a Case Management service in MACWIS requesting the appropriate support service for the ETV voucher. The request can be entered from any county location, regardless of the originating county of responsibility. Youth enrolled in the ETV program on their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday may continue in the ETV program until their 23rd birthday upon meeting the above criteria.

### **C. Chafee Foster Care Independent Program – Independent Living Services**

DFCS is the agency responsible for administering the Chafee Foster Care Independent Program (CFCIP) and the Educational Training Vouchers (ETV) Programs. The Independent Living Program utilizes a contracting agency, Southern Christian Services for Children and Youth (SCSCY). The contractor provides a wide array of independent living services in the Providing Resources, Education and Preparation to Adolescents Reaching Emancipation Program (PREPARE).

The mission of the Independent Living Program (ILP) is to provide youth and young adults in care with an array of services and resources to assist and guide them in making a successful transition to become independent adults.

The ILP helps adolescents acquire basic life skills in their progress toward self-sufficiency. The following is a list of the goals in the CFSP and a brief description of progress:

- Maximize the use of ETV funds to ensure youth obtain postsecondary education and vocational training. Efforts have been successful to maximize the use of ETV funds to ensure all identified youth participate and obtain postsecondary education and vocational training. DFCS estimates that all funds will be maximized.
- Increase awareness on the ETV process for eligible youth. Through joint efforts of DFCS staff and contractor staff for Independent Living Services, ETV awareness has increased. This is an on-going effort to ensure all youth are made aware of the process. To date, all eligible youth are participating in the ETV program.
- Enable youth to become fully functional citizens upon their departure from foster care custody. DFCS Staff and contractor staff continue to make efforts to assure youth receive services to enable them to become fully functional citizens upon their departure from foster care custody. Major efforts have been conducted and are ongoing to collaborate with various resources and additional service providers to achieve this goal.
- Maximize existing mentor programs established in the State. The DFCS Independent Living program has identified various possible mentor programs for youth in care. Efforts have been made, and continue to be made, to recruit potential mentors in the communities across the State.

For a detailed discussion of each of the above listed goals, please refer to Chafee Foster Care Independent Living Services write up description.

**Steps the state agency will take to expand and strengthen the range of existing services and develop and implement services to improve child outcomes.**

There are steps DFCS has identified, in reference to the DFCS Independent Living Program, to expand and strengthen the range of existing services to youth, which were developed and implemented to improve outcomes. One of those steps identified is increased involvement of the direct caretaker in assessing the life skills level of the youth and involvement in the preparation of the youth towards self-sufficiency.

There are no revisions to the existing goals and objectives for the Independent Living Program.

The goals and objectives of Independent Living services are consistent with the Child and Family Services Plan. During an intense evaluation by the Director of Independent Living services, Strategies for Accessing Independent Living Skills committee (S.A.I.L.S.), and the Program Director, it was determined the current goals and objectives would not change. DFCS is continuing to work in conjunction with Southern Christian Services (contractor) to achieve goals and implement the objectives outline by the Independent Living program curriculum.

**Services to be provided in FY 2013, highlighting any changes or additions in services or program design and how the services will achieve program purposes**

For a detailed discussion of the above please refer to Chafee Foster Care Independent Living Services.

**Population(s) to be served, the geographic areas where the services will be available, and the estimated number of individuals and/or families (or to be) served.**

- Youth are eligible for Independent Services based on the following criteria;
- Youth in care, ages 14 until their 21st birthday, are eligible for all Independent Living Services except for criteria placed on the Educational and Training Voucher Program;
- Youth who leave custody, ages 18 to their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, and are eligible for After-Care Services until their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday; and
- Youth who enroll in postsecondary educational and vocational programs may be eligible based on the criteria from the Educational and Training Voucher (ETV) Program.

For a detailed discussion of the above please refer to Chafee Foster Care Independent Living Services.

**Room and Board**

Room and board payments are not offered to youth ages 18 to 21 who have left care. Room and board is defined as payment for general oversight for youth in care. Room and Board payments can be used toward rent for an apartment for youth in care who have attained age 18 and meet the requirements through the Independent Living Placement program (ILP). The ILP is defined as placement in an apartment, house, or rooming house with supervision from a licensed placement agency. This program pays standard board payments to the leasing agency. The youth pays the remaining balance after the board payment has been applied (if there is any) and all utilities while participating in the program. For the next grant year, DFCS plans to reserve 15% of Chafee Independent Living funds to be used for room and board (rental assistance/aftercare services) for youth who have transitioned out of care.

**Annual Credit Reports for in care age sixteen (16) and up:**

- MACWIS will be used to acquire a report that identifies all youth in care age 16 and up. The report will include a youth's name, age, date of birth and social security number.
- A consent form giving DFCS permission to obtain a youth's credit report will be distributed to the COR worker to explain and obtain the youth's consent/signature.
- After the Independent Living Unit (IL) receives the consent form from the COR worker, an IL staff person will submit a request to the three major credit reporting bureaus.
- The COR worker will print the credit report to give to the youth.
- Each youth will sign an acknowledgment form indicating receipt and review a copy of their credit report.
- The acknowledgement form is maintained in the COR file and State Office Independent Living file.
- This process is completed annually with all eligible youth to satisfy the federal mandate.

### **Resolving Inaccuracies in a Youth's Credit Report:**

- If inaccuracies are identified on a youth's credit report, the COR worker will be responsible for the following:
  - Assisting the youth with filing a police report with the local law enforcement agency;
  - Assisting the youth with contacting the three major credit bureaus;
  - Assisting the youth in contacting creditors and financial institutions;
  - Assisting the youth in obtaining legal counsel, if needed;
  - Assisting with contacting the Social Security Administration; and
  - Assisting with filing a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission.

DFCS will exhaust all efforts to ensure youth leaving care have correct and accurate credit reports.

### **Credit Check/Identity theft Policy and Training:**

- IL will develop policy for the credit check process.
- IL will develop training and train the appropriate DFCS staff before beginning the credit check process.
- The credit check/identity theft training will be added to the Independent Living refresher training for DFCS field staff.
- IL will be available for technical assistance to DFCS workers when needed.
- Credit Check/Identity Theft training will be available on the DFCS connection website.

### **CFCIP accomplishments achieved in FY 2013 and planned activities and budgetary levels for FY 2014 for each of the five purpose areas.**

- Youth participation in S.A.I.L.S. quarterly meeting;
- Independent Living Program adopted two slogans, "Now is the Time...Today is the Day!" and "Freedom Brings Responsibility," which focus on encouraging all participants, from staff to youth, to get involved as much as possible;
- Continue the Teen Advisory Board (TAB);
- Print and distribute the ETV brochure;
- Distribute new Independent Living policy;
- Print and distribute the credit check brochure;
- Continue contact with a mentor program-Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Mississippi;
- Six Youth retreats held throughout the contract year;
- One Youth Conference held in June;
- Mississippi selected to participate in the National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning;
- Train Child Welfare Agency Supervisors in the Effective Delivery and Management of Federal Independent Living Service for Youth in Foster Care;
- Independent Living Program and ETV Program Power-Point presentation completed for presenting state-wide;

- Attend Regional meetings to present information;
- Hold the Third Annual Computer Camp for youth-in-care;
- Transitional Living Plan updated and released for usage in MACWIS. New commands placed on the Individual Service Plan to make it mandatory to complete a Transitional Living Plan for all youth who turn 16;
- Implement the FYI-3 handbook for youth-in-care;
- Train and receive technical assistance from the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Youth Development;
- Increase in the stakeholder relationship with the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indian Tribe;
- Mississippi Band of Choctaw youth attended Skills Group, and the Youth Conference;
- Youth information was presented by the NRCFCPPP at three major conference venues in Mississippi;
- Print and issue Independent Living Resource Guides; and
- Continue Independent Living Town Hall Meetings (IL Training) in all thirteen (13) Regions.

**Independent Living Goals for FFY 2013 through 2014 Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP):**

- Provide community awareness of the needs of stakeholders in and out-of-care;
- Develop a functioning After-Care Program in conjunction with the National Youth in Transition Database survey (NYTD) that provides an accurate number of stakeholders age 17, 19, 21, and stakeholders eligible for emancipation. After-Care Programs shall also include: the number of youth that have completed pre-exit interviews, exit interviews, post exit interviews, and NYTD survey. The After-Care program will track the number of stakeholders that have left custody, the number of surveys mailed, the number returned, and the logistical information for each youth (current residence, employment, name and location of school, if applicable, incarcerated, etc.);
- Provide Independent Living Training in conjunction with Foster Parent Training through conferences, foster/resource parent trainings and/or other venues;
- Recruit a minimum of ten youth per subgrantee period to be presented to the Strategies for Achieving Independent Living Services (SAILS) Advisory Committee for approval for the Independent Living Apartment Placement Program; and
- Implement annual credit check process.

**Progress on Established Goals and Planned Activities**

The DFCS Independent Living Program is contracting with SCSCY-PREPARE Program to provide the following services for FFY 2015:

- The employment of a Program Director who will coordinate all facets of the Independent Living Program from a central office, preferably in the Jackson area, where coordination with the State Office can be maintained, two Senior Independent Living Specialists, Independent Living Specialists for the geographically outlined DFCS regions designated

by DFCS.

- Provide services to youth living in foster homes, emergency shelters, group homes, relative placements, residential treatment centers, therapeutic group homes, training schools located in Mississippi and the Mobile, Alabama area. Distribute and announce any and all activities for the Independent Living Program to youth placed in the areas above including the State Independent Living Coordinator.
- The utilization of data collected and furnished by DFCS to locate and administer an independent living skills assessment and program to each appropriate youth who is eligible for the Independent Living Program.
- Provide monthly statistical reports by region and by counties to include the number of eligible youth for Independent Living services, the number of skills groups offered, the number of youth actually participating and the percentages of participation.
- Provide monthly activity reports that reflect unduplicated numbers of youth to whom services were given and the nature of the services. Reports are due by the tenth day of each month.
- Provide a quarterly report to include the following information: Job Status, Type of employment, Level of pay, Type of benefits and a target of 60% achievement of a high school diploma. Of the remaining 40% that did not receive a high school diploma, one-half should achieve a GED.
- Provide an Independent Living Plan and a Transitional Living Plan for each participating youth based on Independent Living assessment results and personal contact. The Transitional Living Plan shall be updated every six months, and distributed to the County of Responsibility worker of that particular youth. The Independent Living Plan will be updated after the completion of each component.
- Provide skills training, using nationally recognized Ansell-Casey Life Skills curriculum, approved by DFCS, to participating youth based on assessments, personal contact, the Independent Living Plan Study and the Transitional Living Plan Study. The curriculum now contains eight modules. The titles of the modules are: Community Resources and Transportation, Communication Skills and Social Development, Employment, Money Management, Decision Making and Study Skills, Housing, Daily Living Skills, and Self-Care. These modules address the five areas of development identified by the Youth Development and Youth Leadership in Programs Organization. The five areas identified are Working, Learning, Thriving, Connecting and Leading. An additional module titled Youth Law Issues will be added during the contract period. Knowledge of the youth will be measured by the utilization of a pre-test at the beginning of each curriculum module. A component review (post-test) instrument will measure learning at the completion of each module. The results of the post-test will be compared to the pre-test given at the beginning of each curriculum component. A statewide average score of 70% achievement for each module will be the target. A compilation of the data will be provided to the State Independent Living Coordinator. Skills Group activities, when appropriate, shall be conducted at key physical locations of the Component presented, at the discretion of the IL Specialist. Key physical locations may include, but not limited to, grocery store, bank, post office, social security office, etc.
- Transportation to skills groups, retreats, teen conferences shall be provided and/or otherwise arranged by the Independent Living Specialists.
- Continuing to encourage DFCS youth to learn and maintain self-sufficiency through

working and social involvement is significant when teaching independent living skills. In an attempt to continuously encourage youth and refrain from discouraging them, DFCS has developed several approaches that can be utilized to justify giving youth credit for skills group hours when working or participating in after school activities:

1. Obtain a copy of participants work schedule and if work times correlate with skills group time give youth 1.5 credit hours for skills activities.
  2. Visit participant place of employment to verify he/she is learning and adapting to his/her work environment.
  3. Obtain a copy of participant's practice/rehearsal schedules to insure practice/rehearsal times correlate with scheduled skills group activity times. If times correlates give youth 1.5 credit hours for skills group activities.
  4. Visit the participant's practice/rehearsal and talk with a coach or activity sponsor to discuss behavior changes he/she may display.
  5. When documenting skills group hours for youth who are not actively participating in skill group activities but earning credit for working or involvement in schools activities, give a brief description of how the youth is using, acquiring, or perfecting a skill being taught in skill group sessions.
- Provide community awareness of the needs of the youth in foster care by participating in available forums. Reports of meetings attended will be completed monthly and a copy provided to the State Independent Living Coordinator.
  - The planning and coordination of one youth conference for 65 youth, ages 15-18, and 30 DFCS Staff who are appropriate for participation in the Independent Living Program. The planning and coordination will include, but not be limited to: living accommodations, meals, transportation, agendas, itineraries, presenters, activities, schedules and two Registered Nurses. Youth Conferences are sponsored events of DFCS and shall be publicized as such.
  - The planning coordination of at least three (6) retreats to be located in different geographical areas of the State so as to furnish an opportunity for participation by appropriate youth in at least one retreat during the contract period. One of those retreats will be designated fishing/wildlife events for youth age 14-15 and youth age 16-18. The event shall be presented to apply fishing to life skills and principles. This is to uphold the principle of "Give a man a fish, feed him for a day; teach a man to fish, feed him for a lifetime."
  - Each retreat shall be open to approximately forty youth, with a minimum of twenty participants. The planning and coordination shall include, but not be limited to: living accommodations, meals, transportation, agendas, itineraries, presenters, activities, and schedules. Retreats will be based on themes to include, but not limited to, leadership, healthy choices and abstinence.
  - Develop a functioning After-Care Program that provides an accurate account of the number of youth eligible for emancipation, the number of youth that have completed pre-exit interviews, exit interviews and post exit interviews, the number that have left custody, the number of surveys mailed and the number returned. A breakdown of where they are residing, working, school, or current location will be provided. Follow up efforts shall include Educational and Training Voucher (ETV) application process to serve as a liaison between MDHS and the former foster youth ages 18-22.
  - Develop and disseminate After-Care brochures, flyers, resource materials and other

documents. Stipend payments will be made by Southern Christian Services for Children and Youth (SCSCY) upon receipt of the completed survey forms to encourage increased participation. The use of surveys will be discussed at retreats and skills groups to make youth aware of the use of the information and the available stipend. Information shall be distributed to locations named in Scope of Services #2, and all DFCS county offices.

- Recruit a minimum of 20 youth per contract period to be presented to the S.A.I.L.S. Advisory Board for approval of the Independent Living Apartment Placement Program.
- Resource Family training in conjunction with DFCS foster/adopt staff and Training Unit. Independent Living staff will attend a minimum of two scheduled foster/adoptive parent training sessions per Adoption District to increase awareness of the needs of older youth. Independent Living Specialists will contact DFCS Adoption Administrators to obtain Resource Family training calendars.
- Achieve a target goal to make contact with all eligible participants, between the ages of 14 to 21. A 15% increase in the number of youth who participate on a regular basis is the target for the contract period.
- Recruit and refer a minimum of fourteen mentors for youth in the Independent Living Program per year. Explore current resources of any existing mentor programs such as Big Brother/Big Sister for the state of Mississippi to possibly implement and assist with mentor recruitment.
- SCSCY staff, in conjunction with the S.A.I.L.S. Regional Representative, will facilitate a youth led Hope Forum (Support Group) for each of the seven Regions. The SCSCY staff will work with the State Independent Living Coordinator and MDHS staff to implement youth led support groups. HOPE Forums will be held quarterly. Two representatives from each region will be nominated at the regional level to attend on an S.A.I.L.S. Advisory Board meeting.
- Increase by 10% the number of youth who are entering postsecondary education. Awareness tactics will be developed and implemented to increase Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) requests by 10%.
- SCSCY staff in conjunction with the S.A.I.L.S. Advisory Board members will provide nominations for the Independent Living All-Star Youth display for the contract period.
- Create and distribute a newsletter highlighting Independent Living Services and activities. The newsletter is to be distributed quarterly to all individuals listed in Scope of Services #2. A copy of the newsletter is to be submitted to the State Independent Living Coordinator two days prior to circulation.
- Distribute and keep a log of the FYI-3 Handbook provided by DFCS. The FYI-3 Handbook is to be distributed to youth in care listed in the County of Services Independent Living report provided by DFCS to all youth, ages 14-20, who enter care. SCSCY staff will deliver a handbook and document the delivery to each youth who turns 14 during the contract period.
- All services provided are to reflect and incorporate the four Core Principles for youth transitioning. They include: Youth Development, Collaboration, Cultural Competence and Permanent Connections.
- Develop a survey to capture information needed for the National Youth Transitional Database.
- The Refugee youth will continue to attend independent living sessions and will receive all the benefits the Independent Living Program has to offer.

## **Planned Activities for 2015**

- Four (4) Independent Living Retreats per region
- One (1) Youth Leadership Conference for sixty-five (65) youth.
- One (1) computer camp for 50 youth.
- One (1) Independent Living Training for therapeutic group home staff
- One (1) annual conference/training for selected DFCS field staff.
- Ongoing Independent Living training for DFCS field staff in the thirteen regions.

## **XIV. FINANCIAL AND STATISTICAL INFORMATION**

### **A. Juvenile Justice Transfers**

For FFY 2013, AFCARS identified 13 children that exited DFCS custody who transferred to another agency.

Of these thirteen children, six children were released with durable legal custody to a residential care facility; two children were transferred to an outside state's child welfare system; two children were reunified and included on report due to data-entry error; one child was adopted and included as a data-entry error; one child was living independently and included as a data-entry error; one child was likely transferred to a mental institution.

### **B. Inter-Country Adoptions**

During FFY 2013, there were 2,426 ICPC cases handled either for placement of children from other states into Mississippi or placement of Mississippi children in other states with relatives. This number includes closures, approvals, Regulation 7 Priority Placements (expedited referrals that must be completed in 20 workdays), disruptions and residential treatment facility placements. During FFY 2013, 741 ICPC adoption cases were handled. There were 168 international adoptions processed for adoptive purposes from October 1, 2012 through December 30, 2012. As of January 1, 2013, DFCS no longer processes requests for international adoptions. During FFY 2013, ICPC processed a total of 3167 cases.

Mississippi does not track the number of children who were adopted from other countries and who enter state custody.

### **C. Child Welfare Demonstration Projects**

Mississippi does not have a child welfare demonstration project at this time.

### **D. Adoption Incentive Payments**

In FFY 2013 Mississippi received \$540,000.00 in adoption incentive payments and finalized 346 adoptions in that same period. These funds were or will be used to:

- Provide equipment for the Resource Units. Equipment includes laptop computers, projectors, color printers, portable scanners, banners, and cameras.
- Send resource staff to national conferences and training events, such as National Foster Parent Conference, North America Conference on Adoptable Children Annual Conference, "Therapists as Adoption Specialists," and "Lookin' To The Future," an annual conference in Mississippi with a dedicated adoption track.

- Present an annual Permanency Conference in MS that focuses on the importance of every child having a permanent family.
- Purchase updated MS PATH training manuals for each of the 13 regions;
- Purchase and implement a new home study format, the S.A.F.E. home study available through the Consortium for Children. Mississippi plans to implement a single, consistent home study format agency-wide and in subsequent years reach out to private providers to encourage them to use the same.
- Enhance the child-specific adoption recruitment services by adding a team of teen-focused adoption recruiters to work with the teens who are free for adoption.
- Bring specific trainings to adoption staff including 3-5-7 Model by Dr. Darla Henry and Family Findings Model with Bob Friend.
- Begin work toward an Adoptee Search Program by getting all adoption files prepared for scanning.
- Bring Adoption Competency Training for Therapists to Mississippi.
- Assist field staff in recruiting and licensing new resource homes.
- Build a statewide Resource Parent Support Group Association.
- Build a statewide Foster Care Alumni Association.

**E. Education and Training Vouchers**

| <b>Year</b>                  | <b>2008</b> | <b>2009</b> | <b>2010</b> | <b>2011</b> | <b>2012</b> | <b>2013</b> |
|------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Total receiving funds</b> | <b>83</b>   | <b>77</b>   | <b>91</b>   | <b>64</b>   | <b>93</b>   | <b>174</b>  |
| <b>New Enrollment</b>        | <b>45</b>   | <b>16</b>   | <b>57</b>   | <b>43</b>   | <b>31</b>   | <b>79</b>   |
| <b>Ongoing Enrollment</b>    | <b>38</b>   | <b>61</b>   | <b>34</b>   | <b>21</b>   | <b>62</b>   | <b>95</b>   |

**F. Financial Information**

1. Payment Limitations – Title IV-B, Subpart 1

The Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS), Division of Family & Children’s Services (DFCS) will utilize Title IV-B, Subpart 1 funds to pay foster care maintenance payments for children court ordered into the State’s custody. The awarded funds will be utilized for those children placed in licensed relative/resource homes.

No more than ten percent of the awarded funds will be utilized to support the agency’s administrative costs.

For comparison purposes, the amount of Title IV-B, subpart 1 federal funding that the State expended for child care, foster care maintenance and adoption assistance payments in FY 2005 was \$3,769,621; the amount of non-Federal funds the state expended for foster care maintenance payments and applied as match for the Title IV-B, subpart 1 program in FY 2005 was \$1,256,540.

## 2. Payment Limitations – Title IV-B, Subpart 2

DFCS will utilize Title IV-B, Subpart 2 funds to support the Comprehensive Family Support Services Program (CFSSP) which consists of the following:

- 30% of costs related to Family Preservation Services
- 20% of costs related to Family Support Services
- 20% of costs related to Time-Limited Family Reunification Services
- 20% of costs related to Adoption Promotion and Support Services

The CFSSP delivers an array of comprehensive, intensive treatment and wrap-around services to children and families involved in prevention cases, protection cases or foster care caseloads serviced by DFCS caseworkers.

DFCS attempts to ensure a minimum of 20% of all costs are allocated to each service component; however, the number of clients served for each category is dependent upon the number of referrals received from local field offices based on the needs of the children and families within those local communities. As a result of the referral based system, client needs tend to fluctuate from year-to-year and DFCS cannot determine what those needs will be in advance. Based upon prior year trends, DFCS anticipates an increased demand for Family Preservation Services which could reduce the demand for clients in need of Family Support Services and Time-Limited Reunification Services.

No more than ten percent of the awarded funds will be utilized to support the agency's administrative costs.

The FY1992 base year amount for Title IV-B, Subpart 2, Promoting Safe and Stable Families grant required to meet the non-supplantation requirements in Section 432(a)(7)(A) of the act for the State of Mississippi is \$900,347.

## 3. FY 2014 Funding – Revised CFS-101 Budget Request

Mississippi's final FY2014 allotments for Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP), and Educational and Training Voucher grant awards were greater than the amount indicated on its previously submitted and approved CFS-101 for FY2014 and the state wishes to receive the higher amount of funding; therefore, Mississippi has revised and attached its FY2014 CFS-101, Part I.

Mississippi does not anticipate any unneeded portions of FY2014 state allocations of Title IV-B, CFCIP and ETV funds that will be available for re-allotment to other states. Mississippi does not intend to release or apply for reallocated funds.

## **XV. CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES REVIEW (May 2010) and PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN(April 2011-2013)**

The May 17-21, 2010 Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) was conducted on site in Hinds, DeSoto and Lauderdale Counties in Mississippi.

### **2010 CFSR Outcome Findings**

The 2010 CFSR identified the following areas of high performance with regard to the State's performance in achieving the outcomes assessed during the review:

- Items pertaining to repeat maltreatment and foster care reentry were rated as Strengths for the State.
- The State met the national standards for the data indicators pertaining to (1) absence of maltreatment recurrence, (2) timeliness and permanency of reunification, (3) timeliness of adoptions, and (4) permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods.
- Although the State's performance on Safety Outcome 1 (Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect) did not meet the required 95 percent level for substantial conformity, performance on this outcome was fairly high, with the outcome being substantially achieved in 85.7 percent of the cases.
- Although the State's performance on the items pertaining to timeliness of investigations, proximity of placement, placement with siblings, and physical health of the child did not reach the 90 percent level required for an overall rating of Strength, these items were rated as Strengths in over 87 percent of the cases.

The State did not meet the national standards for the data indicators pertaining to (1) absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff and (2) placement stability.

The CFSR evaluated state performance on seven outcome areas and Mississippi did not achieve substantial conformity with any of the seven child welfare outcomes for safety, permanency, and well-being. The CFSR documented several areas of concern, including the following:

Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect was substantially achieved in 85.7 percent of the applicable cases.

Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS) was found to be inconsistent in its efforts to address the safety of children who come into contact with the child welfare system. A key finding was that MDHS was not consistent in regard to initiating investigations within the State's time frames.

Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible was achieved in 42.2 percent of the applicable cases reviewed.

This raised concerns that some children are not being sufficiently protected from risk of harm while in their own homes due to the insufficiency or lack of preventative and in-home services. There are concerns that children remain at risk in the home due to services not targeting the key safety concern for the family or no services being provided.

Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situation was substantially achieved in 25 percent of the 40 foster care cases reviewed.

Although Mississippi met the national standard for the data indicators pertaining to timeliness and permanency of reunification, timeliness of adoptions, and permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods, the State did not meet the national standard for the data indicator pertaining to placement stability.

Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children, was substantially achieved in 30.8 percent of the 40 foster care cases reviewed.

The CFSR findings indicated that MDHS did not make concerted efforts to ensure that children in foster care are placed, when appropriate, in close proximity to their parents and communities of origin. Also, MDHS was not consistent in its efforts to (1) place siblings together; (2) establish frequent visitation between children in foster care and their parents and siblings; (3) preserve connections for children in foster care with their neighborhood, community, school, friends, extended family or faith; (4) seek maternal and paternal relatives as potential placement resources; and (5) promote or maintain a strong, emotionally-supportive relationship between children in foster care and their parents.

Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs, was substantially achieved in only 15.6 percent of the 64 cases reviewed.

CFSR findings for this outcome indicated that MDHS is not consistent in (1) meeting the service needs of children, parents, and foster parents; (2) involving children and parents in the case planning process; and (3) establishing face-to-face contact with children and parents with sufficient frequency to ensure children's safety and well-being.

Well-Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs, was substantially achieved in 73.8 percent of the applicable cases. The CFSR findings cited that MDHS did not consistently address the educational needs of children in in-home cases where there was clear evidence that the child(ren) in the family had education-related needs. Stakeholders noted that when educational needs were not being met it was due primarily to large caseloads and/or a lack of effective collaboration between MDHS and local school systems.

Well-being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs was achieved in only 67.2 percent of applicable cases.

A key CFSR finding with regard to this outcome was that MDHS is not consistent in its efforts to meet children's physical or mental health needs. Identified concerns pertained to a lack of dentists who will accept Medicaid.

### **CFSR Systemic Factor Findings**

Mississippi was found to be in substantial conformity with two of the seven systemic factors, which included Agency responsiveness to the Community and Staff and Provider Training. The state did not achieve substantial conformity with five of the systemic factors, including Statewide Information System; Case Review System; Quality Assurance System; Service Array, Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention.

Stakeholders reported that inadequate staff and large caseloads have an adverse effect on achieving several of the systemic factors. Large caseloads and inadequate support staff are prohibiting social workers from entering timely information into the State's statewide information system called the Mississippi Automated Child Welfare Information System (MACWIS). Staff vacancies within MDHS and the Attorney General's office was also identified as a major constraint in the timely filing of Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) petitions and the search for absent parents. These staffing issues also influence the agency's ability to meet the required monthly visits to foster homes. Stakeholders also expressed concern that staffing issues were a barrier to implementing Quality Assurance efforts consistently throughout the State.

The State does not currently have a sufficient array of services in place to address the needs of children and families. Critical gaps in the service array include foster homes (for children of all ages), substance abuse and mental health services for children, youth, and parents. CFSR findings further indicated services are not accessible in all political jurisdictions of the State and that MDHS has limited ability to individualize services for the children and families served by the agency.

### **Mississippi Child and Family Services Review Program Improvement Plan**

Mississippi entered a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) following CFSR in May 2010. The PIP was approved and implemented April 1, 2011 since Mississippi did not achieve two of the National Standards for Safety Outcome 1. The final data for the PIP was submitted March 25, 2014 and the Children's Bureau will review and provide notice of acceptance or request additional information/data.

The following National Standards for Safety Outcome 1 were not met commencing the PIP:

#### Absence of Maltreatment of Children in Foster Care

Therefore, a negotiated improvement goal of 98.23% was agreed upon (National Standard 99.68). As of Fifth Quarter (June 30, 2012) of the PIP, Mississippi exceeded the negotiated goal with 98.41% absence of maltreatment of children in foster care.

#### Placement Stability

Therefore a negotiated improvement goal of 89.5 was agreed upon (National Standard 101.5). As of Ninth Quarter of the PIP non-overlapping year of reporting (July 31, 2013), Mississippi has attained the negotiated goal at 89.7% placement stability.

The following Item-Specific and Quantitative Measurements were areas needing improvement commencing the PIP:

#### Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment

Negotiated improvement goal is 81.4%; As of the Eleventh Quarter of the PIP non-overlapping year of reporting (December 31, 2013), Mississippi has met this goal at 82.5% for the Mississippi Child Welfare Practice Model Regions I-N; I-S; II-W; III-S; IV-N; IV-S; and V-W.

Item 3: Services to Family to Protect Children in the Home and Prevent Removal or Re-Entry into Foster Care.

Negotiated improvement goal is 85.7%; As of the Fifth Quarter of the PIP (June 30, 2012), Mississippi has exceeded this goal at 88.5% for the Mississippi Child Welfare Practice Model Regions I-N; I-S; II-W; III-S; IV-N; IV-S; and V-W.

Item 4: Risk Assessment and Safety Management

Negotiated improvement goal is 71.4%; As of the Fourth Quarter of the PIP (March 31, 2012), Mississippi has exceeded this goal at 72.5% for the Mississippi Child Welfare Practice Model Regions I-N; I-S; II-W; III-S; IV-N; IV-S; and V-W.

Item 5 (CFSR 17): Needs and Services of Child, Parents, and Foster Parents

Negotiated improvement goal is 22.0%; As of the Third Quarter of the PIP (December 31, 2011), Mississippi has exceeded this goal at 22.56% for the Mississippi Child Welfare Practice Model Regions I-N; I-S; II-W; III-S; IV-N; IV-S; and V-W.

Item 7 (CFSR 18): Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning

Negotiated improvement goal is 16.2%; As of the Fourth Quarter of the PIP (March 31, 2012), Mississippi has exceeded this goal at 17.9% for the Mississippi Child Welfare Practice Model Regions I-N; I-S; II-W; III-S; IV-N; IV-S; and V-W.

Item 8 (CFSR 19): Caseworker Visits with Child

Re-Negotiated improvement goal is 69.4%; As of the Twelfth Quarter of the PIP non-overlapping year of reporting (March 31, 2014), Mississippi has met this goal at 70.2% for the Mississippi Child Welfare Practice Model Regions I-N; I-S; II-W; III-S; IV-N; IV-S; and V-W.

Item 9 (CFSR 20): Caseworker Visits with Parent

Negotiated improvement goal is 23.9%; As of the Fifth Quarter of the PIP (June 30, 2012), Mississippi has exceeded this goal at 27.9% for the Mississippi Child Welfare Practice Model Regions I-N; I-S; II-W; III-S; IV-N; IV-S; and V-W.

Item 10 (CFSR 7): Permanency Goal for Child

Negotiated improvement goal is 45.2%; As of the Fifth Quarter of the PIP (June 30, 2012), Mississippi has exceeded this goal at 46.9% for the Mississippi Child Welfare Practice Model Regions I-N; I-S; II-W; III-S; IV-N; IV-S; and V-W.

Item 16 (CFSR 10): Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement\*

Negotiated improvement goal is 78.5%; As of the Ninth Quarter of the PIP non-overlapping year of reporting (July 31, 2013), Mississippi has met this goal at 87.1% for the Mississippi Child Welfare Practice Model Regions I-N; I-S; II-W; III-S; IV-N; IV-S; and V-W.

## **XVI. INFORMATION ON CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICE WORKFORCE**

The official activities and services provided by DFCS Direct Service Workers – Child Welfare Services – compose DFCS “workload”. Workload is measured by computation of the amount of time required to provide or complete defined service-related activities and service types. Each

service-related activity and service is assigned a workload value based on established weights and standards derived from the average amount of time determined to be required to adequately and effectively provide or complete the service-related activity or service type measured on a month-by-month basis.

Workload varies day-to-day, and is measured monthly. By determining the amount of time required each month based on reported workload and dividing the amount of time available by a Direct Service Worker each month to complete the work reported, the number of Direct Service Workers needed is determined. Workload is reported for each Direct Service Worker, each county, each Region, and Statewide, and the number of Direct Service Workers required to complete the work reported at each level – county, region, statewide – is therefore determined each month.

#### Caseworkers

The official standard for a full caseload at DFCS is 100 Caseload Units which constitutes 6,960 workload minutes per month. This standard is derived from a determination that Direct Service Workers have 116 hours (6,960 minutes) of time each month to dedicate to official workload activity – that is, to caseload.

#### Acknowledgements:

- Total workload minutes in a caseload will vary month to month. The standard is based on monthly averages.
- Direct Service Workers will not be assigned cases or service-related activity which results in a caseload exceeding the standard for a full caseload. Caseloads will on occasion, and at specific points in time, on a Worker-by-Worker basis, fail to reach or may exceed the standard.
- Workloads shall be measured monthly and adjustments made as needed.

Continuous effort must be expended by the Regional Directors (RDs) and Area Social Work Supervisors (ASWSs) to:

- Maintain individual caseloads that are within a reasonable range of the standard (within 15 Caseload Units),
- Assure that no Direct Service Worker remains over the standard for an extended length of time,
- Document justification for a Direct Service Worker being assigned cases which results in an over-full caseload, and
- Demonstrate and document efforts taken to reduce the caseload to the official standard.

#### Supervisors

Supervisors shall be directly responsible for no more than five Direct Service Workers. Supervisors shall not be assigned primary responsibility for providing direct casework services for any case except in cases of extenuating circumstances which shall last for no more than four weeks and have been approved in writing by the Office Director of Field Operations after

consultation with the supervisor's RD to ensure the continued proper supervision of the impacted Direct Service Workers.

Regional Directors

RDs shall be responsible for the ongoing validation of cases and validation of workloads. They will ensure that all cases in an open status meet the policy criteria for that case type. They will ensure that valid workloads are distributed as fairly and evenly as possible. This validation will be accomplished through formal case and workload validation plans which will be developed jointly between RDs, ASWSs and state level program staff. These validation plans shall be developed annually and approved by the Office Director of Field Operations.

No supervisor shall be assigned primary responsibility for providing direct casework services for any case, except in cases of extenuating circumstances which shall last no more than four (4) weeks and have been approved in writing by the director of DFCS after consultation with the supervisor's Regional Director to ensure the continued proper supervision of the impacted direct service workers.

**Service-Related Activities and Case Types**

Service Types – and the assigned standard for each in minutes and Caseload Units are as follows:

| <u>Service Type</u>       | <u>Minutes</u> | <u>Caseload Units</u> |
|---------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| Adoption COS              | 300            | 4.3                   |
| ICPC Incoming             | 106            | 1.6                   |
| ICPC Outgoing             | 106            | 1.6                   |
| Placement COR             | 254            | 3.7                   |
| Placement R&S             | 507            | 7.3                   |
| Placement COS             | 253            | 3.6                   |
| Prevention COR            | 138            | 2.0                   |
| Prevention COS            | 137            | 2.0                   |
| Prevention R&S            | 275            | 4.0                   |
| Protection Services COR   | 210            | 3.0                   |
| Protection Services COS   | 200            | 2.9                   |
| Protection Services R&S   | 410            | 5.9                   |
| Case Management Intake    | 59             | 0.9                   |
| Court Ordered Relative    |                |                       |
| Application               | 282            | 4.1                   |
| ICPC Application          | 282            | 4.1                   |
| Investigation Level 2     | 484            | 7.0                   |
| Investigation Level 3     | 484            | 7.0                   |
| General Intake            | 59             | 0.9                   |
| Resource Inquiry          | 59             | 0.9                   |
| Adoption Addendum         | 191            | 2.8                   |
| Foster Home Addendum      | 191            | 2.8                   |
| Resource Home Study       | 470            | 6.8                   |
| Resource Home Supervision | 140            | 2.0                   |
| Resource Renewal          | 191            | 2.8                   |

## XVII. APPENDICES

- A: Children's Justice Act Annual Report and DFCS Response
- B: Monthly Caseworker Visit Data – New FY 2007 Baseline Data
  - Monthly Caseworker Visit Data – FY 2008
  - Monthly Caseworker Visit Data – FY 2009
  - Monthly Caseworker Visit Data – FY 2010
  - Monthly Caseworker Visit Data – FY 2011
  - Monthly Caseworker Visit Data – FY 2012
  - Monthly Caseworker Visit Data – FY 2013

Note: Separate Attachments: Financial Documentation  
FY 2014 Funding-Revised-CFS-101 Budget Request  
FY 2015 Budget Request-CFS-101, Parts I and II  
FY 2012 Title IV-B Expenditure Report-CFS-101- Part III  
Training Course Forms

CFSP/APSR Coordinator  
Lyndsy Landry Irwin  
[lyndsy.landry@mdhs.ms.gov](mailto:lyndsy.landry@mdhs.ms.gov)  
601-359-4282