

Support Services

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PRS served about three-quarters of a million Texans during an average month in fiscal year 1993. The year's budget was \$405.5 million, and staff numbered about 5,800. Most of the agency's budget went to benefit clients directly. The remainder went to pay for direct delivery staff and support services.

External Relations

External Relations informs Texans about the need to protect vulnerable children and adults and invites full partnership of all Texans in helping PRS achieve its mission. By the end of fiscal year 1993, External Relations had evolved to include Public Affairs and Volunteer Services. A community development team, which will work to develop partnerships with such stakeholders as advocacy groups; city, county, and state governmental units; child welfare boards; and church congregations and religious groups, will be added during fiscal year 1994.

Public Affairs includes public information, corporate relations, media services, board affairs, and special projects. Public information responds to requests for information by the general public, news media, public officials, and community organizations. Corporate relations was developed to encourage partnerships with businesses to provide the agency with financial and material donations; professional services, such as training or consulting; and staff time towards volunteer work. Media services is responsible for the development of publications and audio-visual materials for clients, prospective clients, public officials, the general public, and employees of the agency. Public Affairs also coordinates agendas for monthly board meetings and gathers information for public hearings, board meetings, and other projects related to the public and stakeholders.

Volunteer Services was established in March following the hiring of a director. During the first six months, the program recognized outstanding volunteers; prepared handbooks and guidebooks; developed policy; established collaborative relations with the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, Texas Department of Health, Texas Department of Human Services, and the Governor's Office; established an internship program at state office; and worked with regional staff, individuals, and organizations to respond to the needs of clients.

In fiscal year 1994, Volunteer Services looks forward to developing a stronger and expanded program with about 8,000 people statewide providing 5.5 million hours of services. Staff plan to increase work with child welfare boards and organizations such as Texas CASA and coordinate with VISTA volunteers to serve as regional coordinators in rural areas.

Ombudsman Office

The Ombudsman Office began in response to a House Bill 7 mandate for an established system to receive and catalog complaints. That mandate was strengthened by the PRS Board and the Executive Director with a directive to improve the agency's responsiveness to the public. During fiscal year 1993, the director began hiring staff and planned policies and procedures with advice from executive and program area staff.

The agency's philosophical position acknowledges the need to listen and respond to the individuals whose lives we affect. In response to this philosophical emphasis, the following mission statement was developed: We respect every person's right to complain and to be responded to with respect and dignity.

Basic operational guidelines were defined as a result of this mission statement. According to these guidelines, the Ombudsman Office:

- ◆ functions as a neutral third party;
- ◆ provides a single point of entry for inquiries related to case-specific complaints;
- ◆ provides a fair and impartial hearing process for complainants;
- ◆ refers inquiries about program policy to the program area responsible for developing the policy for final response;
- ◆ identifies cluster complaints related to policy and procedure, and provides that information to program staff as documentation for potential policy modifications; and
- ◆ defines a complaint as "a statement of dissatisfaction." Using this definition, all complaints are considered valid until determined otherwise.

In early fiscal year 1994, the office plans to complete hiring of staff, activate a statewide toll-free number, and keep an automated data base containing all complaints and inquiries. Staff will analyze and track information in the data base and team up with staff from all program and support areas to review the data for possible revision of the agency's policies and procedures.

Intergovernmental Affairs

The PRS Board has stated that the agency's mission is to protect the physical safety and emotional well-being of the most vulnerable citizens of Texas.

In pursuing this charge, PRS is committed to promoting full partnership with all stakeholders, including all levels of government, businesses, community organizations and interests, service providers, clients and families, and their

advocates. Additionally, the agency is committed to supporting change of societal attitudes and tolerance of abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Intergovernmental Affairs was created to help the agency build partnerships and support needed change in attitudes by effectively communicating and coordinating activities with local and county government, businesses, other state agencies, the state Legislature, federal agencies, Congress, and other interested public and private organizations. Staff are also committed to developing and implementing a proactive program that will result in improved relationships between PRS and governmental, community, and other interests.

Specific responsibilities assigned to Intergovernmental Affairs include:

- ◆ responding promptly to inquiries concerning PRS policies and activities from the Legislature, Congress, and other public and private organizations;
- ◆ providing information to governmental organizations concerning issues that impact PRS to ensure that state policy makers and others have sufficient information regarding PRS to carry out their duties;
- ◆ coordinating various PRS activities with other agencies and governmental entities to ensure that services are maximized and tax dollars are spent in the most cost-effective manner; and
- ◆ reviewing federal and state legislation, laws, and regulations and helping frame PRS responses to them.

In addition, Intergovernmental Affairs will:

- ◆ survey PRS staff, members of the Legislature, and other interested people to determine what obstacles and barriers exist that prevent PRS from fulfilling its mission;



- ◆ develop proposed state legislation that will remove these barriers;
- ◆ prepare a legislative handbook explaining PRS services and answering commonly asked questions. The handbook will be provided to staff and members of the Legislature, Congress, and other organizations to assist them in constituent services;
- ◆ conduct an orientation for members of the Legislature and their staff concerning PRS services prior to the 1995 legislative session;
- ◆ assist in developing PRS' legislative appropriation request and meet with staff of the Legislative Budget Board, various committees, and others to review this request;
- ◆ develop federal legislative proposals and review these proposals with congressional staff; and
- ◆ participate in various conferences to develop joint strategies to strengthen PRS' relationships with city and county government.

Management Services

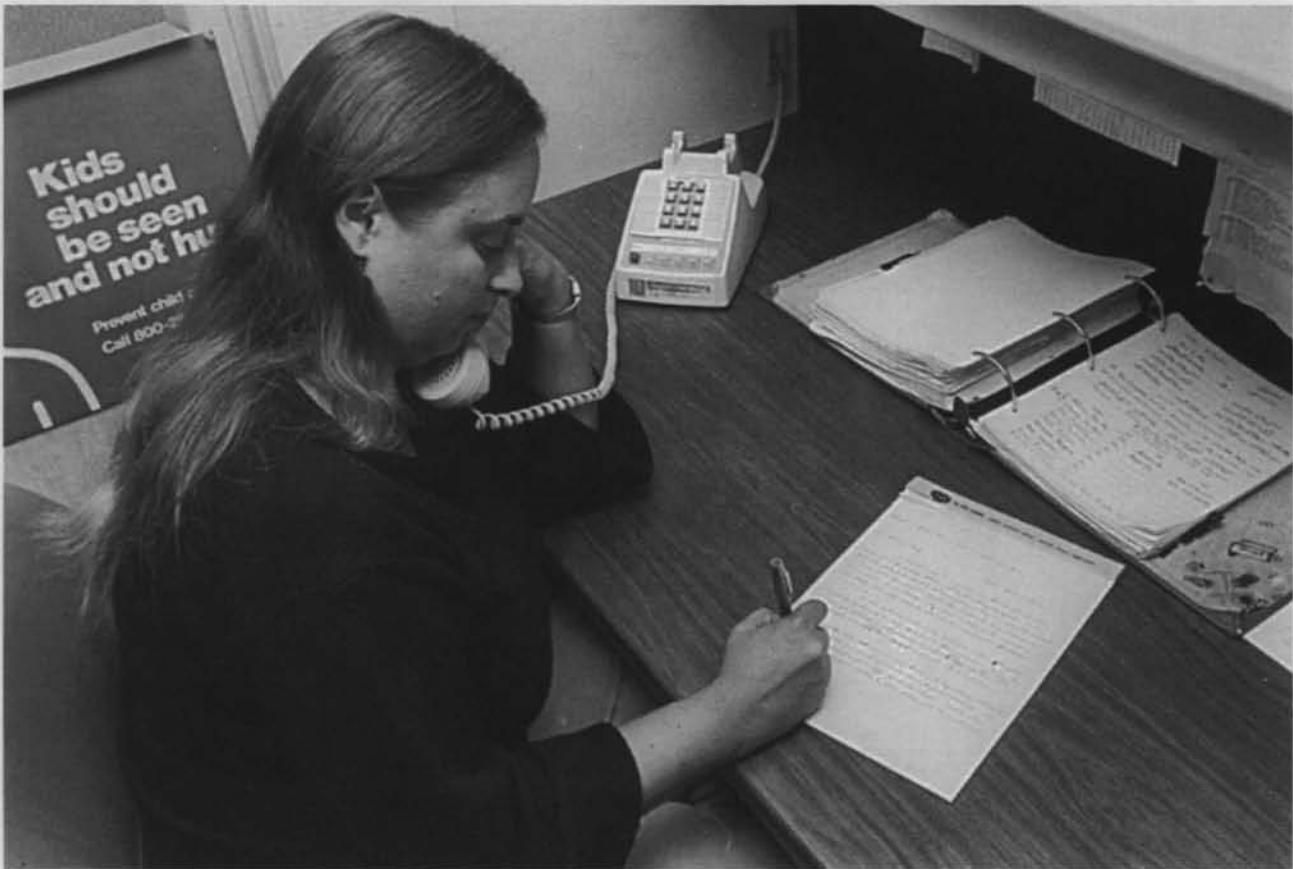
Management Services includes Financial Services (Budget, Fiscal, and Strategic Planning), Business Services, Human Resources, Staff Development and Total Quality Services, and Forecasting and Program Statistics.

Financial Services

Fiscal Year 1993 was a very challenging year for all financial services staff in state government. With the implementation of the strategy structure for budgeting and the restructuring of agencies as mandated by House Bill 7, PRS budget staff spent a great deal of time working with other PRS staff and staff from the Texas Department of Health, Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, and the Texas Department of Human Services to create a budget.

Major activities during the fiscal year included:

- ◆ developing strategies, goals, and objectives for PRS in conjunction with major program areas;
- ◆ preparing the fiscal year 1994-1995 legislative appropriation request (LAR);
- ◆ working with the Legislative Budget Board and the Governor's budget office to provide special analyses and detailed information on the agency's LAR;
- ◆ responding to requests for and projected fiscal year implications of pending legislation during the 73rd Legislature, Regular Session;
- ◆ monitoring PRS' expenditures and preparing routine and special reports for operating managers; and
- ◆ preparing and submitting for board approval the fiscal year 1994 operating plan for PRS, which was approved on Aug. 13, 1993.



Business Services

Business Services staff were responsible for classifying what support services were needed to meet the new agency's program requirements. Services were identified for either in-house or interagency support service contract with the DHS. A minimum number of core staff were hired in March to provide basic support to state office and regional staff and coordinate delivery of services with appropriate DHS support functions. The hiring of other positions began in mid-July with full staffing targeted for the end of September.

Support functions in Business Services include: facility management, space planning, procurement of goods and services, telecommunications, property inventory, advance planning document tracking, safety, risk management, and records management.

By the end of fiscal year 1993, Business Services began assuming purchasing responsibilities and processed a substantial number of orders for automation and other equipment. The automated purchasing systems developed by DHS were adopted for use by state and regional purchasing. DHS staff provided the training to regional purchasers on the use of these systems.

In fiscal year 1993, Business Services assumed responsibility for monitoring state office compliance with requirements for historically underutilized businesses (HUBs). HUB statutory requirements are under review and a plan will be developed in early fiscal year 1994. In August 1993, Business Services also assumed responsibility for agency compliance with the accessibility and

removal of architectural barrier requirements in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Texas Rehabilitation Commission staff provided training to state and regional facility management staff on ADA requirements and facility inspection and evaluation.

Human Resources

Human Resources, which is composed of two sections, Personnel and Employment Opportunities and Client Compliance (EOCC), was created in November 1992. Human Resources staff ensure the selection and retention of qualified personnel based on fair and equitable policies and procedures, maintaining a work environment free of discrimination, harassment, or intimidation, and providing services to clients in a manner that does not discriminate because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or disability.

As its first major objective, Personnel staff created career tracks for caseworkers and supervisors in all three programs—Adult Protective Services (APS), Child Protective Services (CPS), and Child-care Licensing (CCL). For APS and CCL staff, this initiative, which became effective Jan. 1, 1993, was the first opportunity for planned, systematic career advancement.

In July 1993, Personnel staff began a statewide audit of more than 1,750 clerical positions to ensure that clerical workers were properly classified. The audit was done in response to legislative changes in the state's classification plan and the addition of new and expanded responsibilities for many clerical staff with the implementation of a flatter organizational structure. An audit of state office clerical positions is planned for early fiscal year 1994.

Staff implemented the federal Family and Medical Leave Act effective Aug. 5, 1993. The act allows eligible employees up to 12 weeks of leave in a 12-month period for the birth or adoption of a child, placement of a foster child in the employee's home, the serious illness of an immediate family member, or a personal serious health condition.

Also completed this fiscal year was implementation of shift differential pay for caseworkers who work more than 20 hours per week on a schedule other than 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Staff Development and Total Quality Services

Over the years, the concepts of Total Quality have been used by a wide variety of businesses and recently have been accepted by several state agencies in Texas, receiving the endorsement of Gov. Ann Richards. In the summer of 1993, PRS executive and senior staff were trained in Total Quality and will continue to receive ongoing instruction. Gradually, training will be given to all staff that integrates the Total Quality philosophy.

Total Quality requires that staff learn a new way of thinking and supports the belief that a change in attitude brings about a change in behavior. Total Quality puts customers first; empowers employees to make decisions at their own levels; encourages teamwork to solve problems; breaks down barriers within the hierarchy; and rewards employees for doing things that will produce the best results.

Forecasting and Program Statistics

Forecasting and Program Statistics compiles statistical information about programs, services, and the Texas client populations served by PRS. The mission of the staff is to provide timely, accurate, and useful program activity information, measure performance and workload, and to statistically assess the service needs of our clients. The information is analyzed and evaluated to assist with policy development, program management, service monitoring, budgeting, research, planning, and evaluation of the effects of PRS' services.

Forecasting models are developed using automated analytical tools to attempt to predict how many Texans will suffer from abuse, neglect, or exploitation in the future. The staff work with and support program and budget staff throughout the state to use these statistics to determine the service and monetary needs necessary to prevent and alleviate the abuse and neglect of Texas' most vulnerable citizens and to continue that protection through regulation of child-care facilities.

Staff also coordinate, assess, and direct automated systems development and maintenance in order to identify and ensure that the agency's performance, workload, and need-assessment requirements are met. Forecasting and Program Statistics prepares mandated federal and state reports required to obtain the funding necessary for program operations. Staff also provide consultation and technical support, both statistical and automation, to all agency staff and provide the legislature, media, legal, and the general public with program statistical information.

Office of General Counsel

The Office of General Counsel provides legal advice and assists in legal representation of the agency. During fiscal year 1993, a nucleus of attorneys left DHS to form the PRS Office of General Counsel. A permanent General Counsel was appointed May 1, 1993. The office includes attorneys at state office and at sites in regions across the state.

These attorneys provide advice and legal interpretation to program staff, represent the agency in child-care licensing administrative hearings, and assist local county and district attorneys in representing PRS in child and adult pro-

tective cases. Attorneys also assist the Texas Attorney General in representing the agency in cases that require litigation; provide advice on contract matters and personnel decisions; and provide legal training to caseworkers that promotes effective and proper use of Texas statutes and agency rules, policies, and procedures to protect children and people who are elderly or have disabilities.

During fiscal year 1993, the Office of General Counsel advised the agency in creating legislation that would more effectively serve vulnerable Texans. Staff helped track legislation affecting PRS' mission, described its impact on the agency's programs, and interpreted and implemented legislation that passed.

Research and Development

In fiscal year 1993, the PRS board set a goal to review the policies and related practices of Child Protective Services, Child-care Licensing, and Adult Protective Services. Early in 1993, Research and Development staff established a process by which the board can systematically and critically review policy in a timely manner. This process will allow for balanced, inclusive, and appropriate advice from PRS staff, PRS clients, advocates, providers, and the general public. The board, with the aid of Research and Development staff, is examining all program policies and practices to determine their consistency with the mission statement and accordance with federal and state legislation and regulation. This ongoing and careful review of agency policies and practices will bring more consistency, quality, and appropriateness of services to PRS clients.

To increase PRS' opportunities to draw in federal money, the Federal Funds Project was created June 1, 1993. The purpose of this project is to vigorously pursue innovative approaches to qualify PRS programs for new or increased federal financial participation to fund the agency's services. Legislative riders based on the Texas Performance Review completed by the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts directed PRS to establish this initiative. The development and implementation of the project's initiatives are being carried out in close cooperation and collaboration with the state agencies that administer each federal funding source and other related agencies.

Research and Development staff are also responsible for the preparation of grant applications, project monitoring, and technical studies. Grant applications are written and submitted to a variety of federal funding sources and foundations. Applications request discretionary funds to test innovations in service delivery. Projects funded by federal grants for special demonstration projects and innovations in service delivery and management strategies are supported by project monitors, who help with project implementation, provide technical assistance, and report on projects. Technical studies support the analytical needs of program staff by conducting research studies and evaluating programs and projects.

Information Resources Technologies

The agency's Information Resources Technologies area was created during fiscal year 1993. Staff maintained support for the PRS automated systems remaining on DHS computers while working to achieve a solution to the agency's automation needs.

The PRS Automation Project, an effort to completely automate the Child Protective and Adult Protective Services programs, received legislative funding for minimum services, equipment, and software for the 1994-95 biennium. Staff analyzed optimum use for the funding allowed for the biennium, and proceeded with a competitive procurement for a systems integrator to provide hardware, software, and services. The PRS Automation Project evolved from a Request for Information to receipt and evaluation of initial proposals from five major vendors. The 1993 fiscal year closed with the procurement in the final rounds of selection. A project of this complexity and scope has never existed in the area of child and adult welfare in the United States.

Major accomplishments for the fiscal year included:

- ◆ establishing agreements with DHS to continue the automation support needed during the start-up of PRS Information Resource Technologies' operations;
- ◆ submitting and receiving approval for the agency's first Information Resources Technologies strategic plan through the Department of Information Resources;
- ◆ establishing a plan for implementing automation for the agency;
- ◆ receiving accolades from federal funding authorities regarding the composition of the PRS Automation Project's Request for Proposal and the resulting evaluation process;
- ◆ placing 635 work stations and 183 printers for the CPS interim equipment project in field offices to allow staff across the state immediate access to word-processing tools and electronic mail while the automation project procurement proceeded; and
- ◆ completing the first procurement for end-user computing, which consists of smaller automation projects outside the realm of the larger automation project.