

*Support Services*

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## Support Services

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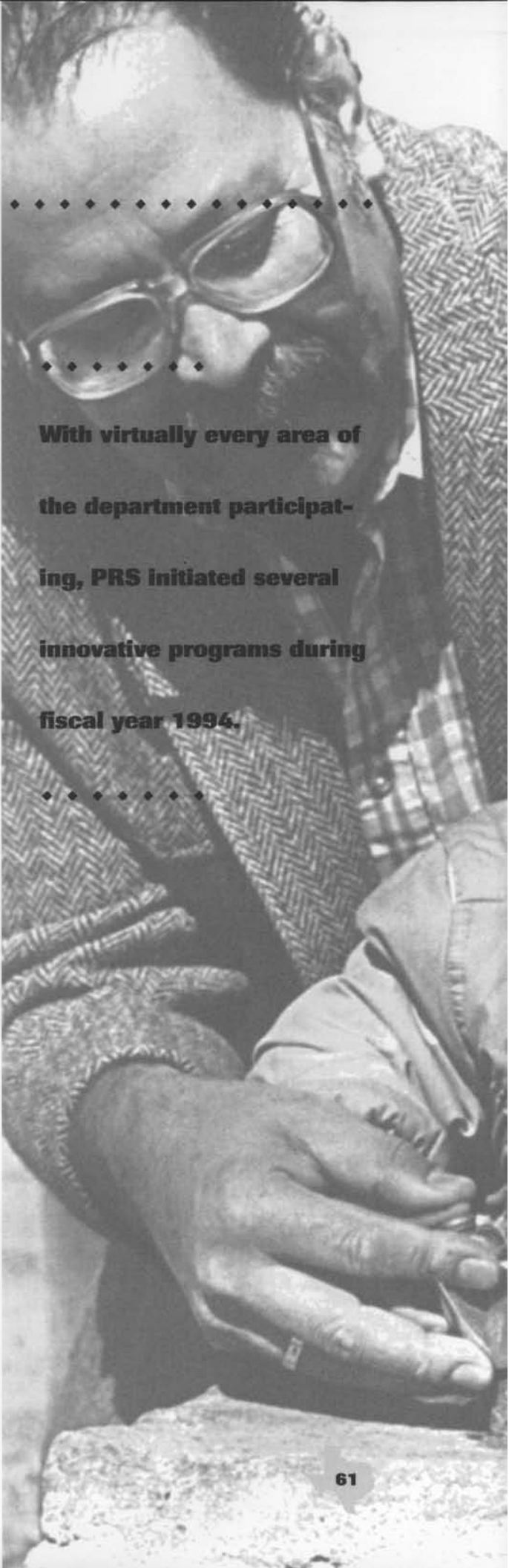
### External Relations

The Office of External Relations works with the department's key stakeholders (local communities, client advocates, professional associations, providers, and program staff) to promote the protection of vulnerable children, adults, and families. It serves as a catalyst in the genesis of community partnerships to develop more comprehensive and effective solutions to the protective services needs of local communities throughout the state. The office includes three divisions: Public Affairs, Community Development, and Volunteer Services.

### Public Affairs

Public Affairs, which works in conjunction with Public Information, includes corporate relations, media services, board relations, and special projects. Public information responds to requests for information by the general public, news media, public officials, and community organizations. Corporate relations seeks to develop collaborative partnerships with business that strengthen the community's commitment to nurture and sustain healthy family relationships and expand the range of options available for meeting the needs of those in need of protection. Media services is responsible for the development of publications and audio-visual materials for clients, prospective clients, the general public, and employees of the department. Public Affairs also coordinates agendas for monthly board meetings, gathers information for public hearings, board meetings, and other projects related to the public and stakeholders.

During fiscal year 1994, Public Affairs worked with outside agencies such as child welfare boards and foster parent associations to produce communications materials about the department's services. Public Affairs also received national recognition for *Pressing Forward*, the statewide newsletter for the department's staff and retirees.



With virtually every area of the department participating, PRS initiated several innovative programs during fiscal year 1994.

### **Community Development**

The Community Development team was established during fiscal year 1994; it consists of a director and three community liaisons. The team's focus is to develop social infrastructure that enhances a community's capacity to care for its members. Working through the regional staff of the department, community development professionals provide technical assistance, guidance, and support for local initiatives that seek to enhance families' and communities' capacity to provide nurture, sustenance, and support for their members.

The team's efforts over the past year have resulted in the resurrection of the One Church, One Child project in Houston, which seeks to increase the number of African-American children adopted within their communities of origin. The groundwork was also laid for the adoption of this program by local churches in the communities of Dallas, Fort Worth, and El Paso.

In El Paso, team members served as a catalyst for the development of a Child Advocacy Center and a residential treatment program for seriously disturbed adolescents. In the Rio Grande Valley, staff were instrumental in the development of a 47 county community collaborative project, "Salud Y Unidad En La Familia," which received \$1.3 million from the Health Services and Resources Administration (HRSA) and a designation as a "Special Project of National Significance," one of only four such projects in the country.

Community development staff brought together a coalition of state agencies, universities, advocacy groups, and philanthropies to develop a statewide volunteer parenting education project that secured \$4.7 million in Americorps funding for 27 local communities across Texas. This project was one of only five Texas projects to receive funding from the national pool of Americorps funds.

Goals for the upcoming year include:

- ◆ collaboration with the Human Resources division to develop a diversity plan and

more effective recruitment and retention programs for staff who possess the necessary skills to work with the increasing diversity of Texas' population;

- ◆ expansion of our current partnerships with colleges and universities across Texas in the areas of research and staff training and development; and
- ◆ continued collaboration with local communities to develop or replicate projects that strengthen Texas families and prevent abuse or neglect of vulnerable individuals with particular emphasis on minority communities and the Frontera (the Texas-Mexico border area).

### **Volunteer Services**

Volunteer Services has successfully promoted the use of community volunteers within the department. In fiscal year 1994, about 8,000 volunteers provided 426,554 hours of service valued at \$4,615,310.69.

A sampling of the variety of ways in which volunteers are involved with the department's programs include:

- ◆ Adopt-A-Caseworker programs;
- ◆ VISTA projects in both Adult Protective Services and Protective Services for Families and Children;
- ◆ speakers' bureaus;
- ◆ mentoring projects in the "Preparation for Adult Living" program and between child-care providers;
- ◆ guardianship programs for APS clients; and
- ◆ Teen Court and Adult Community Service placements.

A major focus of the Volunteer Services staff has been the development of the infrastructure required to support the growth of volunteer programs. A major accomplishment in this regard was the development of regional volunteer teams, which consist of staff across all the department's divisions, to plan, develop, coordinate and evaluate the regional volunteer pro-

gram. Some teams have reached out to include other stakeholders such as VISTA volunteers or Family Outreach staff.

The Office of External Relations, as its contribution to the fulfillment of the department's mission, will continue to promote collaborative partnerships with local communities and the department's stakeholders; to strengthen our capacity to serve the diverse needs of Texas' vulnerable citizens; to facilitate the development of community-based prevention programs; and to seek change, through effective communication and public education strategies, in those societal attitudes that justify and tolerate abuse, neglect and exploitation.

### **Office of Government Relations**

The Office of Government Relations (OGR) was established to promote full partnership with all stakeholders, including all levels of government. OGR concentrates on helping the department to communicate effectively and coordinate activities with local and county government, business, other state agencies, the state Legislature, federal agencies, Congress, and other interested public and private organizations. Staff are committed to developing and implementing a proactive program that will result in improved relationships between PRS and governmental, community, and other interests.

OGR's specific responsibilities 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 affect PRS to ensure that state policy makers and others have sufficient information regarding PRS to carry out their duties;
- ◆ reviewing federal and state legislation, laws, and regulations and helping frame PRS responses to them.

In addition, OGR:

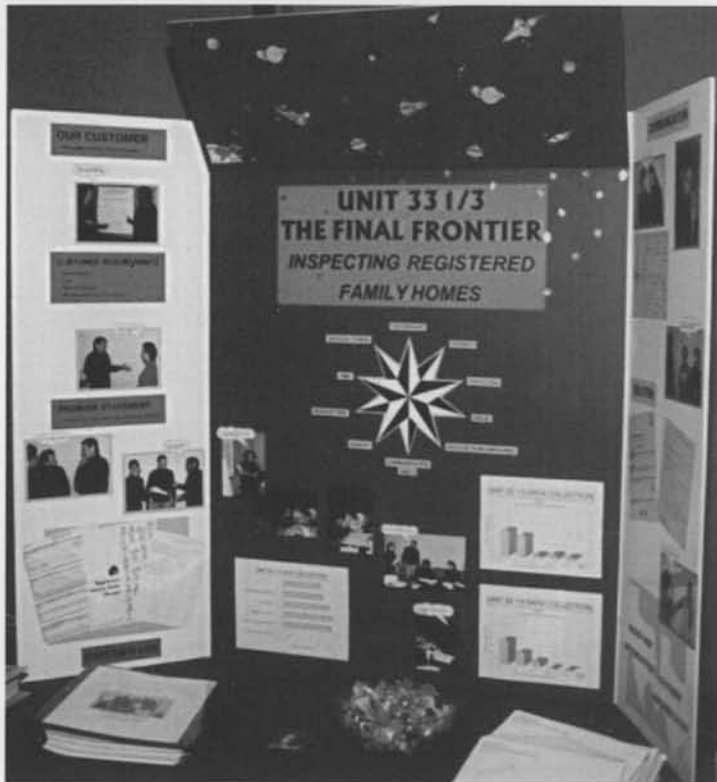
- ◆ has developed proposed state legislation for the 1995 legislative session;
- ◆ has provided this legislation to members requesting assistance;
- ◆ will conduct orientations for members of the Legislature and their staff concerning PRS services;
- ◆ assists the department's Management Services staff to develop PRS' legislative appropriation request and meet with staff of the Legislative Budget Board, various committees, and others to review this request;
- ◆ develops federal legislative proposals and reviews these proposals with congressional staff; and
- ◆ participates in various conferences to develop joint strategies to strengthen PRS' relationships with city, county, and state government.

### **Management Services**

Management Services includes Financial Services (Budget, Fiscal, and Strategic Planning), Business Services, Human Resources (Personnel and Employment Opportunity and Client Compliance), Staff Development and Total Quality Initiative, and Forecasting and Program Statistics.

### **Total Quality Initiative**

In September 1993, PRS embarked on a journey to create a learning organization and to develop processes to improve the department's systems. During the past year the total quality initiative focused on training and working with 70 process improvement teams located throughout the state. These teams, made up of staff at all levels and in all areas of the department, focused on improving processes that are under their control. Part of the total quality focus involves interviewing our customers and focusing on their requirements. Data collection and analysis are also integral parts of this process. This year's work culminated in a high-



ly successful quality exposition held in September 1994.

While staff were working on their process improvement teams, the PRS executive team was working on developing their skills as a learning team and providing guidance to the process improvement teams.

During next fiscal year the department plans to train an additional 100 teams that will apply process improvement techniques to improve even more systems throughout the state.

### **Financial Services**

Financial services staff continued to meet many challenges in fiscal year 1994. A new strategic planning process was initiated resulting in the development of the department's first formal strategic plan. Work also began on development of coordinated strategic plans for offices and divisions throughout the agency.

Other major activities during the fiscal year included:

- ◆ preparation of the fiscal year 1996-1997 Legislative Appropriations Request (LAR);

- ◆ working with the Legislative Budget Board, Governor's office, and legislative committees to provide special analyses and detailed information on the LAR and on department programs and projects;
- ◆ establishment of a budget analyst function in each PRS region to provide consistent analysis and budget support to regional and state office management staff;
- ◆ coordination with the Texas Department of Human Services for fiscal support to PRS; and
- ◆ preparation and submittal of the fiscal year 1995 department operating plan.

### **Business Services**

Functions in Business Services include leasing and facility management, procurement of goods and services, telecommunications, safety, risk management, and records management.

Facility management staff developed and maintained a data base for the 277 offices occupied by PRS staff. In addition, floor plans including approximately 1.1 million square feet of PRS office space were entered into Automated Computer-Assisted Drafting (ACAD) software. The ACAD and its associated software will enhance Business Services staff's ability to plan for and manage department facilities in future years. Facility management staff also processed 35 new leases during fiscal year 1994.

During 1994, Business Services assumed full responsibility for meeting PRS purchasing and accounts payable needs. Efforts continued to meet state goals for award of purchases to Historically Under-utilized Businesses (HUBs.) As a result, 26.42 percent of PRS purchases were awarded to HUBs in fiscal year 1994, compared to 18.65 percent in fiscal year 1993. Other significant accomplishments during fiscal year 1994 included such diverse activities as initiation of a work group to prepare the agency's first safety plan, development of a plan to reduce microfilming backlogs for CPS adoption and conservatorship case records, and suc-

cessful negotiations for and implementation of an Automated Call Distribution (ACD) switch to support the agency's Statewide Intake Project.

### ***Human Resources***

During fiscal year 1994, the first full fiscal year as an established division, Human Resources (HR) staff accomplished a variety of projects aimed at ensuring fair and equitable policies and procedures for employees. One of the largest, and continuing, efforts was refinement of the career track system, a systematic career advancement plan for caseworkers and supervisors in Adult Protective Services (APS), Child Protective Services (CPS), and Child-care Licensing (CCL). HR staff also restructured and merged the client abuse investigators career track with the APS career track to reflect APS cross-training of its workers for investigations in both the community and facilities.

HR's clerical study, begun last year to ensure that clerical employees are properly classified, was completed after staff analyzed more than 2,000 questionnaires, processed about 300 appeals, provided recommendations and cost projections for executive approval, and coordinated payroll changes. As a result of the study, more than 1,000 people were reclassified. Statewide audits to ensure correct classification were completed on seven other job classifications involving more than 100 positions. Staff also assisted with a State Auditor's Office Compliance Audit of 275 PRS positions to ensure alignment with the state's classification plan. The audit found only two job classification series needing changes next fiscal year. Staff created and distributed the PRS Job Description Manual, which gives specific functions of and minimum qualifications for each job classification in the department, and developed a new list of 49 standardized job audit forms to help supervisors create jobs more quickly.

To make sure that employees' job performance is evaluated on equitable criteria throughout the state, HR staff worked with APS staff to develop uniform tasks and standards for

performance appraisals and drafted new performance appraisal forms for testing next fiscal year. Regional and state office staff were trained on the classification system, performance appraisals, and selection testing procedures.

A new decentralized system, in which regional directors (in the regions) and deputy directors (in the state headquarters) will become the final decision-making authority for adverse actions such as terminations, was established and will be implemented in fiscal year 1995. To ensure that all adverse actions follow policy guidelines, HR staff focused much of their statewide training activities on adverse action procedures for supervisors, regional personnel specialists, and regional directors. Some regional and state office staff also received training on the department's anti-sexual harassment policies and Equal Employment Opportunity Commission policies and compliance procedures. This effort is continuing.

HR staff completed and distributed to PRS employees the first five of eight chapters of the PRS Human Resources Handbook, which details the department's human resources policies and procedures. HR staff also developed and began testing a statewide electronic job announcement system which will allow all PRS employees electronic access to information about vacant positions within the department. In addition, staff implemented a job line—a recorded message announcing vacant positions at the department's state headquarters.

Working with staff from other state agencies, HR staff participated in research and analysis projects in preparation for implementation of the Uniform Statewide Payroll System (USPS). Once completed, this system is expected to provide centralized payroll authority and statistical access and reduce duplicate administrative efforts. Another statewide program, the state service buy-back program, was implemented this year, allowing employees to buy back military service and refunded state retirement service that has never before been available through payroll deductions.

To help employees better understand their benefits, HR staff conducted seminars on tax-deferred savings plans and retirement, coordinated the annual insurance, TexFlex, and Texas Legal Protection Plan enrollment; and conducted the Savings Bond drive. In response to employee benefit claims and questions, HR staff processed more than 2,000 benefits-related forms and responded to more than 6,000 telephone calls from employees, health-care providers, and other agencies.

### ***Staff Development***

The Staff Development division works with PRS management to further staff's effectiveness by providing educational and training opportunities designed to meet the diverse needs of all employees. Efforts are being focused in three major areas: automation, program area, and management development and human resources training. The Total Quality philosophy and tools are incorporated into all learning areas to support the vision, mission, and culture of PRS as a learning organization.

Automation training staff are in the process of developing and providing curriculum, self-instructional modules, and computer-based training. Currently, staff are assisting the CAPS training administration system and hiring trainers to help in the delivery and development of software. Staff are incorporating these applications into the APS and CPS Basic Job Skills Training (BJST).

Program area training is provided to all CPS supervisors, APS, CCL, and statewide intake staff. This comprehensive training gives employees a basic understanding of each program area's mission, philosophy, expectations, and the rationale for policy and standards. The training also provides staff with the opportunity for continued personal and professional growth and development.

Management development and human resources training is a comprehensive program for department management and supervisors. The program also provides human resources training relevant to all PRS staff such as pre-

vention of sexual harassment, safety in the work place, and writing skills.

Staff Development is building an infrastructure and creating standardized systems and procedures that enhance staff effectiveness. This includes development of a policy and procedures handbook, a standard registration system, and an automated course catalog and calendar. The division intends to make these systems easily and readily available to all PRS staff.

Staff Development is also providing organizational development services to management in many PRS offices and divisions including Information Resource Technology and the Office of General Counsel. These services include skilled facilitation for work groups, meetings, and training sessions.

### ***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 assess statistically the service needs of PRS 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 ensure that protection through regulation of child-care facilities.

Staff also coordinate, assess, and direct automated systems development and maintenance in order to identify and insure that the department'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 department staff and provide the legislature, media, legal, and the general public with program statistical information.

In early August 1994, Forecasting and Program Statistics staff hosted the National Association for Welfare Research and Statistics' 34th annual workshop in Austin. With help from many PRS staff and staff at the Texas Department of Human Services, the workshop was a major success, combining education and a lot of fun for those who participated.

### **Office of General Counsel**

The Office of General Counsel provides legal advice and assists in the department's legal representation. During fiscal year 1994, the Office of General Counsel filled all vacant positions in the department's state headquarters and many of the vacant positions in the regional legal offices. A full complement of legal staff is vital to providing effective legal assistance to the department.

The Office of General Counsel in both the department's state headquarters and regional offices provides advice and legal representation to program area staff, represents the department in administrative hearings, assists local district and county attorneys in representing PRS in child and adult protective cases, and manages the department's litigation in which court representation is provided by the Attorney General's office. The Office of General Counsel also provides advice in contract matters and personnel decisions, as well as legal training to caseworkers that promotes effective and proper use of Texas statutes and department rules, policies, and procedures to protect clients.

During fiscal year 1994, the Office of General Counsel helped the department create policies

and procedures that would appropriately implement legislation passed during the 1993 Texas legislative session. The Office of General Counsel staff members are also key players in developing the department's legislative initiatives for the next legislative session. Staff compiled a comprehensive handbook setting forth confidentiality guidelines for all PRS programs. The handbook promotes legally correct and consistent application of confidentiality statutes, rules, and policies throughout the state.

### **Research and Development**

Legislative riders enacted by the 73rd Texas Legislature directed PRS to increase federal financial participation by more than \$80 million during the fiscal year 1994-95 biennium. This mandate means replacing about 14 percent of the department's state funds with federal funds. Responsibility for the PRS initiative to respond to these riders rests with the federal funds management staff in the Research and Development division.

With virtually every area of the department participating, PRS initiated several innovative programs during fiscal year 1994 to comply with these riders. Under a new Title XIX (Medicaid) Targeted Case Management Program, case management activities performed by CPS and APS staff qualify for funding. The Title IV-A Emergency Assistance Program funds some services for CPS clients who qualify, as well as some other functions performed by CPS staff. The Title XIX Psycho-Social Treatment Services Program is also being developed to fund covered treatment services provided within some foster care settings. Foster care providers are contributing to this development by participating in an extensive time study of their services. Overall, PRS has very successfully responded to the challenge of replacing state funding with federal funds.

Research and Development also supports the Texas Board of Protective and Regulatory Services' initiative to establish a department-wide process for ongoing review and tracking



of PRS policies and procedures. In May 1994, the PRS Board adopted a plan calling for:

- ◆ a separate, comprehensive review of policy in each program area;
- ◆ continued sharpening of the Board's statements of values, mission, objectives and expectations;
- ◆ periodic critical evaluation of the department's mission statement in light of emerging trends and challenges;
- ◆ review of the Board's policy framework as it relates to the Texas Strategic Plan; and
- ◆ engaging community sources to enhance both departmental perspectives and to gain information.

Research and Development is preparing a detailed plan to put the proposal adopted by the Board into operation. When fully implemented, the PRS Policy Review Process will provide a mechanism for:

- ◆ taking a proactive position on emerging policy issues;
- ◆ adequate and appropriate input from clients, the community, and other interested parties;
- ◆ tracking implementation of new Board policies and decisions; and
- ◆ cross-program tracking of policies for department-wide continuity and consistency.

Research and Development staff are also responsible for preparing grant applications, monitoring projects, and conducting technical studies. Grant applications are written and submitted to a variety of federal funding sources, as well as private foundations. In fiscal year 1994, Research and Development obtained six federal discretionary grants totaling \$3.3 million for PRS to operate multi-year projects to test innovations in service delivery and management strategies. In a collaborative effort, staff obtained a \$2.9 million federal award for the Mental Health Association of Texas to conduct a three-year parent education project. Specialized staff within the division assist fed-

erally funded projects with implementation, project operations, and preparation of federal reports. Staff also conduct research projects and evaluate programs and projects to support the needs of program area staff. For example, staff members currently are conducting a controlled caseload study for CPS and an evaluation of the PRS Automation Project.

### **Information Resource Technologies**

Information Resource Technologies (IRT) was established as the department's automation division. During fiscal year 1994, IRT hired an information resource manager and established and staffed critical positions for a statewide support structure.

IRT staff followed the department's Total Quality initiative in the way they implemented systems and considered all impacts, resulting in better decision making. IRT used facilitators in meetings, incorporated business re-engineering in defining requirements for the department's automation project, and participated in a process improvement team established to find ways to make information on PRS products and services more accessible to employees.

IRT provided automation support to the department's Ombudsman Office. Staff designed, developed, installed, and continue to support a system that tracks all inquiries and provides critical information to the department's Board and management on how PRS does business. This information is being used to improve policy and rule-making decisions.

During fiscal year 1994, IRT established a methodology to meet the requirements of legislation related to oversight by the Quality Assurance Team. This team consists of the Department of Information Resources, the Legislative Budget Board, and the State Auditor's Office and is charged with monitoring high risk automation projects.

IRT also worked with Research and Development staff to implement changes to

the department's pre-existing (or legacy) systems needed to obtain additional federal funds. Working with APS, IRT expanded automation to support the program's facility investigators who were transferred to PRS.

IRT staff worked with DHS to expand and stabilize the technical environment of the department's statewide intake project (the abuse hotline). IRT also hired addition staff to provide 24-hour support for LAN/network services.

### **CAPS Project**

The biggest news for IRT in fiscal year 1994 was the awarding of a contract for the department's Child and Adult Protective System (CAPS) project. The contract, which was given to Andersen Consulting, was issued without protest using the catalog method. Staff issued a purchase order, obtained approval for federal funding, and established a contract management area to oversee the project's progress.

To help prepare department staff for the change to an automated system, IRT created statewide and regional transition teams. IRT coordinated efforts between Andersen and DHS to provide access to legacy systems and communication between the old and new electronic mail systems needed to support PRS until all new systems are in place.

Because Texas is one of the first states to begin automating child welfare and because of the quality and thoroughness of the documents, the Federal government is using PRS' Advanced Planning Documents (APDs) as models for other agencies.

IRT coordinated with APS and CPS to ensure that the project was meeting their needs. After consulting with the program areas' front-line staff, IRT staff began to develop the custom application needs for CAPS.

In accordance with the Texas Health and Human Services Commission's strategic directions, IRT formed a partnership with DHS to capitalize on existing computer network resources for the department and project. Staff developed a very detailed interagency agreement to be committed to by both agencies.

