

Managing for the Future

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Providing quality service means making the most of the resources we have.

In 1996, PRS began a comprehensive effort to improve management and administrative systems. A special group of staff representing all regions and programs met in Austin at the beginning of the year to review the department's functions. Their recommendations formed the basis for significant changes in organization and administrative practice.

PRS continues to work for better services for clients. We are improving training for staff, simplifying processes, building in better controls, and increasing communication between PRS and other agencies which serve our clients.

Information Technology

Development of automated systems to support casework and provide accurate management information has been a top priority of the department. In September 1996, PRS implemented the Child and Adult Protective System (CAPS). CAPS features specially-designed software for documenting child protective services and adult protective services cases, and includes features for referrals and contractor payments. Critical information can now be accessed easily by caseworkers anywhere in the state. The system also produces management reports and collects data to meet federal reporting requirements.

The project involved a large-scale effort to distribute computer equipment, develop and test software, train users, and convert existing data. With automation of the child protective services and adult protective services programs successfully launched, the department has now begun plans to automate child-care licensing.

Improved Accountability

Improving accountability has also been a major goal of the

department. A new internal audit division, added in 1996, provides critical information to managers about the effectiveness of the department's internal systems of control. Performance measures, an important means of tracking how effectively the department is meeting its goals, were made more accurate. A new business planning process, which includes reviews of field operations, was instituted.

Integrated Statewide Administrative System

PRS is now working on a project with the Texas Education Agency and the State Comptroller to develop a system that will bring together all of the department's financial management functions. The Integrated Statewide Administrative System (ISAS) will allow department managers to coordinate budgeting, purchasing, accounting, and labor distribution all on one system. With better information, it will be easier for managers to plan and monitor the department's budget and respond to changing circumstances. The new system is scheduled for implementation in 1998.

Contract Management

Individuals, community organizations, and businesses provided services to PRS clients through more than 1,400 contracts in fiscal year 1996. These services included evaluation and counseling for abuse and neglect victims and their families, treatment in residential child care facilities, and community services such as home health aid for adult protective services clients.

In 1996, PRS centralized monitoring and oversight of all contracts to ensure wise use of department funds. The department introduced uniform procedures and developed standardized contracts for fiscal year 1997 with new, more stringent performance measures and fiscal accountability requirements.

Containing Costs

The department streamlined administration, reducing the number of state office divisions and consolidating regional management. A new staffing system implemented during 1996 gave managers greater control over spending by linking budget and hiring. And new systems for reporting allowed the department

to monitor workloads and substitute care expenditures more closely.

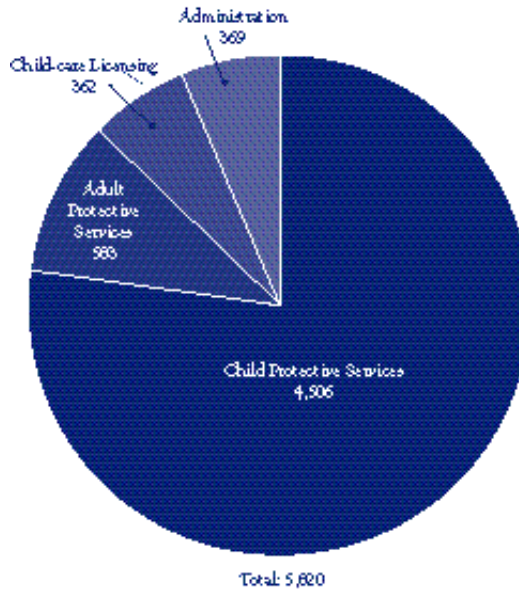
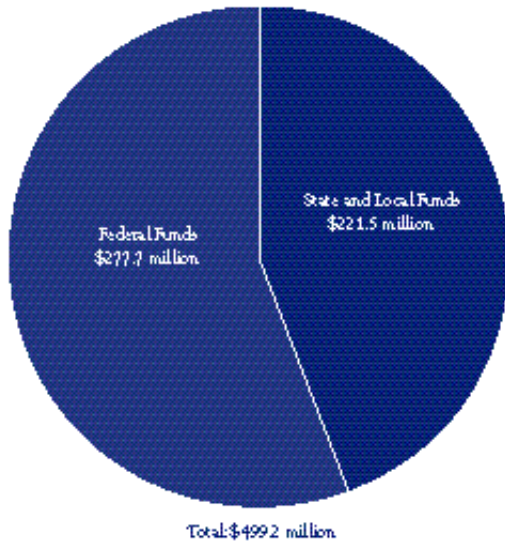
Strategic Planning

In July 1996, the Board approved a strategic plan to take the department into the next century. Developed with input from PRS' partners in the com-

munity and other stakeholders, the plan describes the department's philosophy and outlines objectives and priorities for the next five years. The plan sets ambitious goals for reducing the incidence of abuse and neglect and places strong emphasis on prevention and community participation. ■

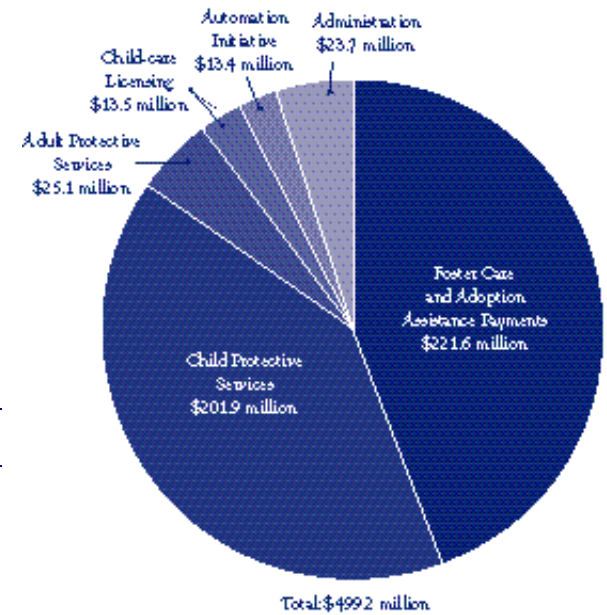
Budget Summary Fiscal Year 1996

Where the Money Came From



Staff

PRS Expenditures



Looking Ahead

The Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services continues to face significant challenges. Demand for services is increasing, but the resources available are limited. Greater prevention efforts are urgently needed, but these must often compete for scarce funds with more immediate needs for intervention. Caseworkers continue to carry high caseloads, in some regions double the industry standard. And though the full effects of federal Welfare Reform legislation are not yet known, millions of dollars of federal funds for such essential functions as foster care are at risk.

The outlook is not all bleak, however. Automation is increasing the ease and efficiency of many of the tasks involved in case work. Partnerships with the private sector and increased volunteer participation is helping to fill some of the gaps between needs and available services. And better management means that more of our limited resources will go into direct service delivery.

The department's functions and activities were reviewed in 1996 by the Sunset Advisory Commission. The Commission's staff report, issued in April, called for a number of improvements and recommended continuation of the department. Many of the report's recommendations have already been implemented by PRS.

The best hope for the future lies in the commitment of the people of Texas to the protection of our most vulnerable citizens. As Texans are becoming more aware of the problems of abuse and neglect, and their terrible costs for the victims and for society, they are calling for solutions. Working together, we can protect the unprotected. ■