



TEXAS
Department of Family
and Protective Services

House Public Health and House Human Services Joint Interim Hearing

H.L. Whitman, Jr., DFPS Commissioner

November 1, 2017

The mission of the Department of Family and Protective Services is to protect children, the elderly and people with disabilities from abuse, neglect and exploitation by involving clients, families and communities.



Preparations Prior to Harvey

- In June, CPS ensured providers had updated evacuation plans in case of severe weather.
- CPS contacted all KIN/FAD families, to ensure they would follow emergency procedures.
- Coordination with Superior for medically-fragile children.
- DFPS Facilities in affected areas closed and staff released prior to landfall.



Harvey Landfall

- First landfall in Corpus Christi and Rockport, major rain event and sustained flooding in Houston area, second landfall in Port Arthur and Beaumont.
 - Intakes, Investigations and Removals continued thanks to strong law enforcement partnerships.
 - DFPS monitored provider evacuations and maintained contact throughout the storm.
 - Agency handled preparation, response, and recovery simultaneously.
-



Post-Harvey Recovery

- Partnership with TACFS, TNOYS, TxPAPS, Texas CASA, TCHC and many others.
- Rainbow Rooms and Silver Star Rooms stepped up to help communities.
- Faith-community was critical to successful recovery.
- Mobilized staff to see clients and assist as necessary, even staffed Red Cross Shelters.
- DFPS facilities repair and recovery in progress.



Impact to Providers and Capacity

- At the peak of the storm, 18 GROs and 8 RTCs were evacuated.
- An estimated 1,500 children in our care were evacuated.
- Several providers experienced extreme damage to their operations.
- Surveying providers and closely analyzing data trends to measure the long-term impact to capacity.



Impact to DFPS Workforce

- Over 100 DFPS staff permanently displaced due to catastrophic damage.
- Thousands of staff impacted with damage to property and evacuation.
- Beaumont, Port Arthur and Port Neches DFPS Offices severely damaged.
- Ensured access to counseling and trauma services post-storm.



How Can We Improve?

- Memorialize decisions and procedures made during the storm for future events.
- Install Emergency Coordinator Position and emergency planning for inclement and major weather events.
- Use lessons learned to formulate updated policies, legislative initiatives and legislative appropriations request.