



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES

INTERIM COMMISSIONER
Ben Delgado

October 1, 2008

The Honorable Rick Perry
Governor of Texas
P.O. Box 12428
Austin, Texas 78711

The Honorable Steve Ogden
Chairman Senate Finance Committee
Texas Senate
P.O. Box 12068
Capitol Station
Austin, Texas 78711-2068

The Honorable Warren Chisum
Chairman House Committee on Appropriations
Texas House of Representatives
P.O. Box 2910
Austin, Texas 78768-2910

Mr. John O'Brien, Director
Texas Legislative Budget Board
P.O. Box 12666
Austin, Texas 78711-2666

Dear Sirs:

Retaining workers remains an ongoing challenge for the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) due to the nature and volume of the work—protecting children, the elderly, and people with disabilities from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Staff retention is critical to improving service delivery and to minimizing the impact of staff turnover. While turnover is still high at DFPS, the agency's turnover rate decreased from 21.2 percent in FY 2007 to 19.4 percent in FY 2008.

Pursuant to Rider 13, House Bill 1, 80th Regular Legislative Session, DFPS is directed to develop a Human Resources Management Plan designed to improve employee morale and retention. The plan must focus on reducing employee turnover through better management. Per the requirements of Rider 13, we respectfully submit the following items:

- a report on the FY 2008 Human Resources Management Plan accomplishments for the past year;
- a discussion of the turnover statistics for FY 2008;

- an analysis of workforce retention challenges; and
- an outline of the initiatives for the new FY 2009 Human Resources Management Plan.

The DFPS goal is to employ highly motivated, diverse, ethical, well-trained and professional staff who are committed to the agency's mission and well-prepared to produce successful outcomes. The DFPS organization will demonstrate its commitment to retain employees through the implementation of proactive strategies, policies, procedures and practices that:

- Manage workloads;
- Value employees;
- Promote employee communication and input;
- Strengthen supervision;
- Improve hiring practices; and
- Enhance the work environment.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this information.

Sincerely,



Ben Delgado
Interim Commissioner

Enclosures

cc: Mike Morrissey, Governor's Office
Kristi Jordan, Governor's Office
Sarah Hicks, Senate Finance Committee Director
Julie Haerber, Senate Finance Committee
Amy Peterson, House Appropriations Committee Clerk
Janice Elhert, House Appropriations Committee
Nancy Millard, Legislative Budget Board

Rider 13 - Human Resources Management Plan

A Report from
The Texas Department of Family and
Protective Services

October 1, 2008

Introduction

Senate Bill 1, Rider 15, from the 79th Regular Legislative Session and currently, House Bill 1, Rider 13, from the 80th Regular Legislative Session, direct the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) to develop a Human Resources Management Plan designed to improve employee morale and retention. The plan must focus on reducing employee turnover through better management. The effectiveness of the agency's plan shall be measured by whether there is a reduction in annual employee turnover rates at the agency, specifically by the reduction in the turnover rates for caseworkers.

The past two legislative sessions have ushered in an era of tremendous change and reform for the agency. Recognizing that the provision of effective client services is heavily dependent on a trained and dedicated workforce, many of the reforms are directed at attracting and retaining high quality staff in the department's Child Protective Services (CPS) program, as well as in the other two large programs, Adult Protective Services (APS) and Child Care Licensing (CCL). The Human Resources Management Plan reflects both the investment in retention and employee morale as a result of reform efforts and the continuing challenges DFPS experiences in attempting to reduce turnover.

In an effort to review the new FY 2009 Human Resources Management Plan within the context of the past year, this document includes the following:

- Final Rider 13 report detailing the progress made on the FY 2008 Human Resources Management Plan
- Discussion of the turnover statistics for FY 2008
- Analysis of workforce retention challenges
- Rider 13 report outlining the FY 2009 Human Resources Management Plan
- Appendix: Turnover and HR-Related Data for Fiscal Years 2007 and 2008

Overview of DFPS Workforce Support and Retention Initiative (WSRI)

The DFPS Workforce Support and Retention Initiative (WSRI) is a direct result of the FY 2008 Human Resources Management Plan and an attempt to bring together all retention and recruitment efforts into one initiative. This initiative is designed to be a comprehensive effort to capitalize on activities occurring in different areas and programs around the state and to allow for ongoing high-level attention from executive staff.

The DFPS goal is to employ highly motivated, diverse, ethical, well-trained and professional staff who are committed to the agency's mission and well-prepared to produce successful outcomes. The DFPS organization will demonstrate its commitment to retain employees through the implementation of proactive strategies, policies, procedures and practices that:

1. **Manage workloads:** Systematically analyze practices and make recommendations that will increase the efficiency of frontline workers, thus reducing workloads and turnover, while improving outcomes for children and families. With the assistance provided through CPS Reform Continued, reduce CPS caseloads by reducing the number of children who enter the foster care system, and continue the progress made from the APS Caseload Management Reduction Plan.
2. **Value employees:** Support an organizational culture where good performance by employees is recognized and the opinions of dedicated employees are appreciated. Recognize that many other factors that contribute to job satisfaction and retention are not as directly related to money and are within the control of the employer. Utilize plans and strategies related to

employee wellness, work/life balance and increasing our employees' sense of connection with the agency.

3. **Promote employee communication and input:** Centrally gather employee information, with a primary area of focus on issues relating to workforce support and retention. Vet information and seek a resolution or response from the appropriate source. Work to ensure all of the relevant divisions are consulted when issues cross more than one division of the agency. Share information with DFPS staff using the most appropriate communication tool (e.g., DFPS Delivers, Commissioner's Q&A, Broadcast message, cascading communication).
4. **Strengthen supervision:** Better equip agency supervisors/managers/leaders to perform their job duties and support their staff by strengthening their understanding of leadership and retention and adding "peer trainer" positions.
5. **Enhance the work environment:** Explore ways to improve the work environment for staff, by addressing issues related to office space, worker safety, automation needs and innovations, and flexible work schedules.
6. **Improve hiring practices:** Provide a comprehensive approach to improving hiring by identifying and/or developing policies, procedures and best practices that will help the agency locate, recruit and hire applicants that have an aptitude for direct delivery work and are capable of providing the highest level of service to DFPS clients.
7. **Region 8 Retention Pilot:** Serve as an incubator for ideas and innovations that support retention of staff. Serve as a place where identified recommendations can be tried and evaluated so that successful ideas are disseminated to the rest of the state.

The following table shows the projects related to each initiative:

FY 2008 Human Resources Management Plan Projects

Initiative	Project
Manage Workloads	APS Case Reduction Plan – Section 2.18 of Senate Bill 6, 79 th Regular Session, directs the Health and Human Services Commission to develop, subject to the availability of funds, a caseload management reduction plan to reduce, not later than January 1, 2011, caseloads for APS workers to a level that does not exceed professional caseload standards by more than five cases per worker. In FY 2008, the average daily caseload for APS In-Home Services was 30.0. This is down from the FY 2007 caseload of 36.4. An update to the 2006 Caseload Reduction Plan will be completed in December 2008 and efforts to balance reasonable caseloads will continue.
Manage Workloads	CPS Caseloads – As part of CPS Reform Continued, the Legislature allocated additional staff and funding to reduce Family Based Safety Services and Substitute Care caseloads. CPS Reform Continued also targets fewer children entering foster care and shorter stays for children in foster care, bringing down caseloads. Both Family Group Decision Making and the Enhanced In-Home Support Program have been established and clients are currently being served. The Enhanced In-Home Support Program pilot is being conducted in 15 counties. The evaluation period for the pilot is expected to last until August 2009.

<p>Manage Workloads</p>	<p>Strengthen Child Care Licensing (CCL) – CCL received additional resources in the 80th Regular Session including 84 additional staff. CCL created a performance management division with case analysts who focus on the performance of CCL workers and risk analysts who concentrate on the performance of facilities and child-placing agencies. An investigations division was also created to oversee all licensing investigation policy and training as well as provide consultation and technical assistance to field staff on investigations where children are at the greatest risk. The additional staff provided Residential Child Care Licensing (RCCL) with the opportunity to reorganize staff by function. The creation of functional units for monitoring and investigations allows staff to improve specific skill sets, develop expertise and establish good working relationships internally and with stakeholders. The additional staff helped to reduce RCCL caseloads from 13.2 in FY 2006 to 11.3 in FY 2007 to 7.8 in FY 2008 as of July.</p>
<p>Manage Workloads</p>	<p>Job and Task Analysis – A job and task analysis involves observing job holders as they accomplish their job tasks. Each step, or action, of the job is noted and described in detail. A job and task analysis for CPS caseworkers was completed and has been used to redesign the Basic Skills Development (BSD) training course for new caseworkers. The development of the materials for the redesigned CPS BSD course is going forward. The new CPS BSD will roll out in early FY 2009. The job and task analysis is also being used to identify additional training and further skill development needs of existing staff, conduct workload management efforts, identify potential job restructuring and redefine entry level abilities necessary for potential new employees. The agency presented the results of the caseworker job and task analysis project in June 2008 in San Diego, California at the American Society for Training Development annual international conference. Over 10,000 people from nearly 100 countries were present at the conference. The DFPS presentation was very well received.</p>
<p>Value Employees</p>	<p>Performance Management Initiative - The Performance Management Initiative worked with the various programs and divisions to develop performance measures and tools for tracking progress. All three of the large direct delivery programs, APS, CPS and CCL have fully implemented their performance management system, as have Contract Oversight and Support, the Human Resources Customer Interface, the Center for Policy and Innovation, and Management Reporting and Statistics. In addition, most of the remaining divisions and support areas have made major progress in developing and implementing performance management systems. All remaining divisions and support areas are targeted for implementation completion by December 31, 2008.</p> <p>Implementation of the initiative includes identifying critical program metrics of performance, developing the reporting infrastructure to support aggregate monitoring of performance, developing standardized performance plans for like jobs and making them available for staff in our AccessHR system, developing computer and paper-based instructional materials, training all supervisor and management positions, and developing a plan for providing on-going training to new supervisors. DFPS employs over 1000 casework managers in our direct service programs across the state. The Performance Management Initiative helps supervisors identify employee behaviors that supervisors should recognize and reward.</p>
<p>Promote Employee Communications and Input</p>	<p>Continuation of Program Improvement Committees (PICs) – PICs for every program have been established in all regional offices. DFPS has tracked the issues and suggested resolutions to issues elevated through the PIC process, including topics regarding travel and human resources.</p>

<p>Promote Employee Communications and Input</p>	<p>Employee Intranet – The DFPS intranet is a tool to disseminate information to staff. Articles in the bi-weekly intranet newsletter DFPS Delivers inform staff about policy changes, program initiatives, and regional events. In October 2007, the Operations division launched the “How Do I ...?” intranet subdirectory designed to get DFPS staff the procedural information they need quickly. The Commissioner’s Tour inspired a wealth of intranet content such as newsletter articles, photo galleries and topics for the “Commissioner’s Q&A.”</p>
<p>Promote Employee Communications and Input</p>	<p>Expansion of SOE Questions – The Survey of Organizational Excellence is administered to all state agencies as a way of gathering employee input. Survey results are collected and analyzed by an independent research team at the University of Texas. Each organization participating in the SOE can add organization-specific questions for its employees. Specific questions regarding retention were included in the DFPS Survey administered in Spring 2008. The SOE results were made available to all DFPS staff via the agency intranet in August 2008. Agency executives will establish targeted goals and identify opportunities for improvement based on the survey results.</p>
<p>Promote Employee Communications and Input</p>	<p>Commissioner’s Tour – The Commissioner and members of the executive team traveled to regional offices to visit with regional leadership and frontline staff. At each stop, the Commissioner held an all-staff meeting where attendees could ask the Commissioner questions face to face. The tour also included a regional management meeting where regional representatives from all programs and divisions could raise issues and concerns. All questions, issues and concerns were documented and pursued as appropriate.</p>
<p>Strengthen Supervision</p>	<p>STARS – The Supporting, Training and Retaining Staff (STARS) program strengthens new supervisors by providing online and in-person feedback on their experiences and provides timely follow-up training and support. DFPS has worked with resource partners from the National Staff Development and Training Association (NSDTA) and the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) to develop training modules. DFPS and its partners are currently developing more modules. An online tool kit was developed to support the STARS program. It is intended as a resource for regional STARS teams to strengthen their local STARS programs. The toolkit content, case vignettes and activities were designed to be used flexibly with a range of STARS formats. The toolkit includes ten modules designed to increase the effectiveness of new supervisors. Topics include making the transition, communication, team building, unit care and management, rewards and recognition, and others. The toolkit also includes a speaker’s catalog, resources for supervisors, online training for supervisors, and a section featuring best practices from STARS around the state.</p>
<p>Strengthen Supervision</p>	<p>CPI Redesigning Supervisor/Leadership Training – The agency’s leadership training, DFPS Tomorrow, has been redesigned and the new program was implemented September 1, 2008. Modifications to the program include a more methodical approach to allow for completion within one year, concentration on developing great leaders who comprehend the agency’s vision for the future, stronger support and guidance from local career development coordinators, and a new attention to professional networking. The application/selection process began in June 2008, and the selected participants attended their first training sessions in September 2008.</p>

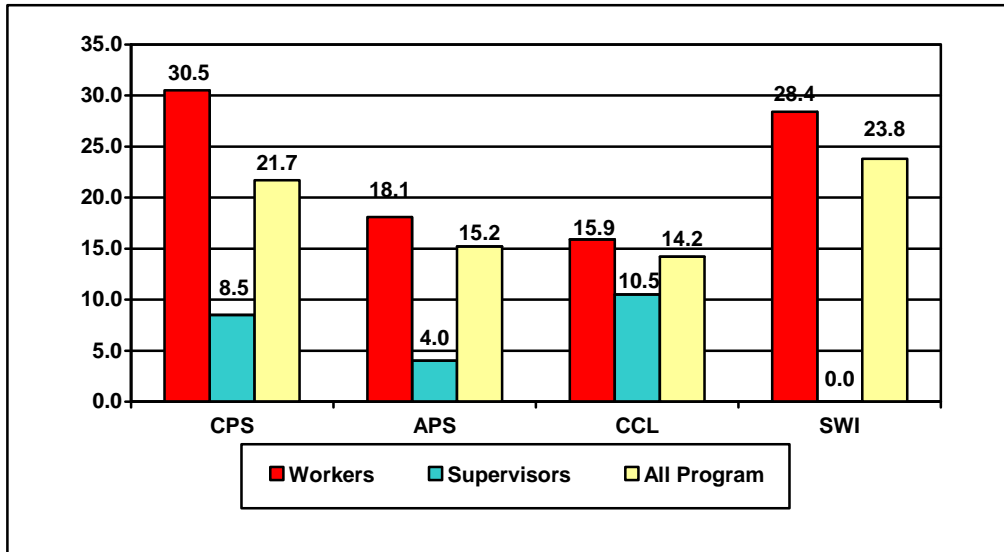
<p>Strengthen Supervision</p>	<p>Program Director (PD) and Program Administrator (PA) Leadership Program – In November 2007, APHSA led a two-day learning-by-doing institute with PAs, PDs and supervisors in Region 6 to teach leadership skills systematically addressing issues identified by staff as most critical. Areas included on-the-job training, recognition and communication. The scope of work for the Houston APHSA initiative was refined to CPS PAs, PDs, and supervisors in Region 6. APHSA has completed the work in Houston and built sustainability by leaving in place a local steering committee structure that will function to address issues that were identified in the early stages of this process. The changes in morale, communication and leadership were so profound that other areas of CPS program have requested the same interventions. In Spring 2008, CPS Leadership invited APHSA to begin the process with the regions with relatively new Regional Directors (3, 7, 10 and 11.) This too, is showing promise of improving overall communication and morale. To sustain the momentum from these initiatives and to replicate the process in other areas, APHSA has agreed to work/train CPS Quality Assurance staff (responsible for CFSR QA) and CPI Professional Development Division staff in the techniques used. The agency acknowledges and is grateful for the contributions of Casey Family Services in funding this project with APHSA to enhance the CPS program.</p>
<p>Strengthen Supervision</p>	<p>Peer Training and Job Development – DFPS converted 50 special investigator positions to statewide CPS peer trainers. The job description for these peer trainer positions is finalized. Each on-the-job-training (OJT) supervisor will be assigned at least two peer trainers to be used to work with new investigators to enable them to be more prepared for their jobs.</p>
<p>Strengthen Supervision</p>	<p>PSTI Partnership – A planning group was established in April 2008 to begin assessing and making recommendations for the Protective Services Training Institute (PSTI) contract for FY 2009. The FY 2009 contract was finalized and includes a new line item for research and evaluation. We have also procured additional training to enhance the development of supervisors in managing day-to-day activities more effectively. On October 3, 2008 a PSTI/DFPS retreat will be convened to begin planning the structure for a DFPS Corporate University where educational resources are strategically aligned under an agency umbrella to carry out the mission of the agency. The planning group will bring recommendations to the PSTI Executive Governance Committee in FY 2009 for the FY 2010 contract. The contract will be aligned to meet the needs identified by the planning group and will be approved by the Executive Governance Committee.</p>
<p>Enhance the Work Environment</p>	<p>Expand Mobile Technology Efforts – DFPS began providing tablet PCs for CCL monitoring and investigative staff in March 2008. All CCL monitoring and investigative staff received tablet PCs by May 2008. Tablets for CPS substitute care workers were phased in over the biennium. Each worker receiving a tablet attended a two-day training session introducing the workers to the new hardware and providing instruction on how to integrate it into their work practices.</p>
<p>Enhance the Work Environment</p>	<p>Mobile Caseworker Initiative – In FY 2008, the pilot of the Mobile Caseworker Initiative was expanded from approximately 40 caseworkers and supervisors to 338 workers and supervisors in four regions. Respondents to the Phase 1 pilot assessment reported a 70.6 percent increase in time spent with clients; a 44 percent decrease in the use of SpeakWrite (a phone-based transcription service); and increased field use of the tablet. Morale and retention increases were observed, with a majority of participants reporting that they will maintain their employment due to this new mobile way of working. Some supervisors reported better management of staff activities as a result of the mobile management model.</p>
<p>Enhance the Work Environment</p>	<p>Tablet and Desktop Refresh – The tablet PC refresh of older APS devices was completed in March 2008. New units replaced the older equipment. The new units are sturdier and offer better performance which should decrease the amount of repairs needed, thus keeping the tablets in the hands of the caseworkers with less downtime.</p>
<p>Enhance the Work Environment</p>	<p>Expand Office Space – DFPS continues to add office space placing an emphasis on location with community partners, both within the HHS enterprise and at outside locations. Co-location is in place in many areas of the state and has proven to be very beneficial.</p>

Enhance the Work Environment	Formalize Processes for Flexible Work Schedules – The flexible work schedule policy/procedures for DFPS are currently being drafted and are under consideration by the Enhancing Work Environment work group.
Improve Hiring Practices	Stipends for CPS Investigators – DFPS provides stipends to attract and retain staff in the critical investigator roles in CPS. This job function has been an area of significant challenge in retaining staff. The stipend program provides investigation caseworkers and supervisors a \$5,000 annual stipend, paid in monthly increments of \$416.67.
Improve Hiring Practices	Merit Raises – DFPS structured its budget priorities in the 2006-2007 biennium to allow for a merit program to recognize employees for jobs well done in supporting or delivering services to clients. Resources were available to recognize about one quarter of all staff.
Improve Hiring Practices	Other Compensation-Related Factors – DFPS provides differential pay to staff at the Statewide Intake hotline who work the hard-to-fill overnight and weekend shifts. DFPS is exploring a tiered approach to compensation for newly hired staff and continuing stipends for APS workers. The DFPS legislative appropriation request (LAR) includes a funding request to address high-turnover positions. DFPS is requesting the elimination of Worker I as the entry-level classification for direct delivery caseworkers. Additional incentives proposed are recruitment and retention bonuses for direct delivery staff meeting specific criteria. APS and CCL have also requested an expansion of the educational stipend program in the 2009-2010 biennium.
Improve Hiring Practices	Expansion of Pre-employment Testing (PET) and Continued Evaluation – PET is currently used in CPS and APS and was expanded to CCL and Statewide Intake (SWI) during FY 2008. The testing started at the beginning of the 2008 calendar year and will continue during FY 2009. DFPS is coordinating with the vendor to complete a predictive validation study of the APS PET that should be completed during FY 2009.
Improve Hiring Practices	Targeted Degree Recruitment – Senate Bill 758, 80 th Regular Session, directs DFPS to target individuals for employment who hold a bachelor’s or advanced degree in specific academic areas. DFPS is working with HHS Human Resources and Convergys to enhance the application tracking system’s ability to report on degree types. DFPS attended 61 job fairs held at colleges, universities and other community venues. An additional 30 speaking engagements to promote the work of the agency occurred in similar locations during the same time period. The acquisition of a contract with Career Builder enhanced the agency’s ability to focus recruitment efforts towards individuals holding targeted degrees. Data since June 2008 indicates more than 1,700 candidate résumés have been searched using the résumé database. Individuals meeting desired criteria are notified of job openings in their area. Statistics also indicate that more than 3,700 potential applicants have been referred from agency postings on the career builder site to the HHSC’s online job application portal.
Improve Hiring Practices	Termination Statistics Report – Managers continue to use the Termination Statistics Report to analyze turnover data down to the supervisory unit level.
Improve Hiring Practices	Workforce Stabilization – The Improving Hiring Practices work group has completed their review of the hiring process for CPS workers. The group recommended creating a realistic job preview video for caseworkers, which will be part of the FY 2009 Human Resources Management Plan.
Region 8 Retention Pilot	Piloting New Ideas – The Region 8 Retention Pilot serves as an incubator for ideas and innovations that support staff retention. In July 2008, the work group submitted recommendations to the WSRI regarding workload management, salary, hiring, training and development, and morale and culture. Many of the recommendations are already taking place within the WSRI structure. Several of the Region 8 recommendations have been adopted and implemented. DFPS has changed the salary range on caseworker job postings to be more realistic with what a new caseworker can expect to make. The agency relaxed the pre-employment testing requirements for returning caseworkers who performed satisfactorily prior to leaving DFPS. Through the FY 2009 PSTI contract, DFPS will offer training to supervisors on managing a virtual workforce.

FY 2008 Turnover Results

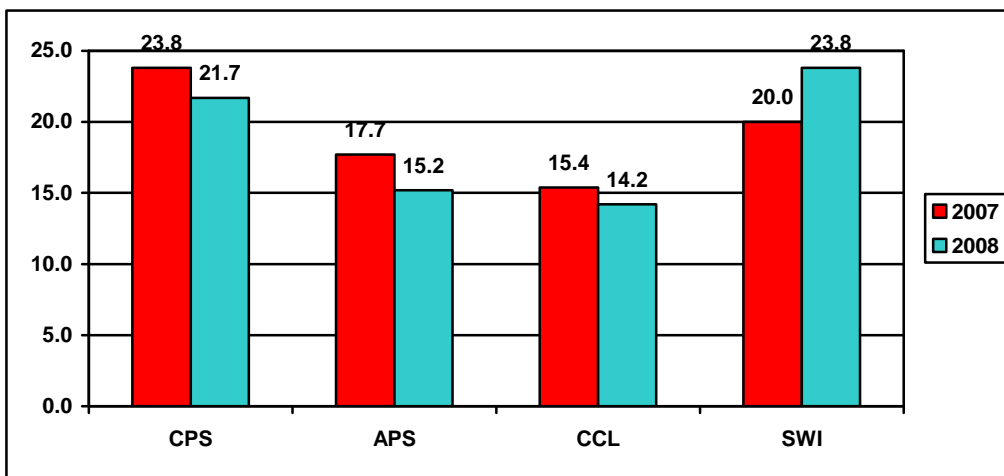
The Human Resources Management Plan's efforts will be determined by the turnover across the agency and particularly among caseworkers. The agency's turnover rate decreased from 21.2 percent in FY 2007 to 19.4 percent in FY 2008. The following chart shows the FY 2008 turnover for Child Protective Services (CPS), Adult Protective Services (APS), Child Care Licensing (CCL) and Statewide Intake (SWI).

Percentage Turnover by Program, FY 2008



From FY 2007 to FY 2008, the turnover rates in CPS, APS and CCL decrease. The CPS turnover rate decreased from 23.8 percent in FY 2007 to 21.7 in FY 2008. APS saw a decline of 2.5 percentage points, from 17.7 percent to 15.2 percent. Turnover in CCL dropped from 16.2 percent to 14.2 percent. The turnover rate for SWI increased during this time by 3.8 percentage points, from 20.0 percent to 23.8 percent. The turnover rates in FY 2007 and FY 2008 for CPS, APS, CCL and SWI are shown in the following chart.

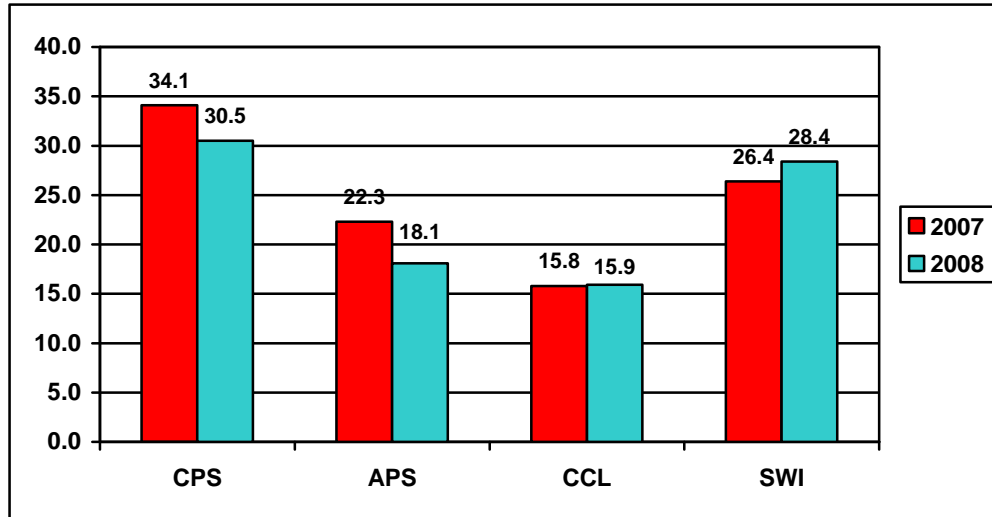
Percentage Turnover for All Programs, FY 2007-2008



The turnover rates for CPS and APS workers decreased in FY 2008. The rate for CPS workers fell by 3.6 percentage points, from 34.1 percent to 30.5 percent. The agency retained more caseworkers in FY 2008;

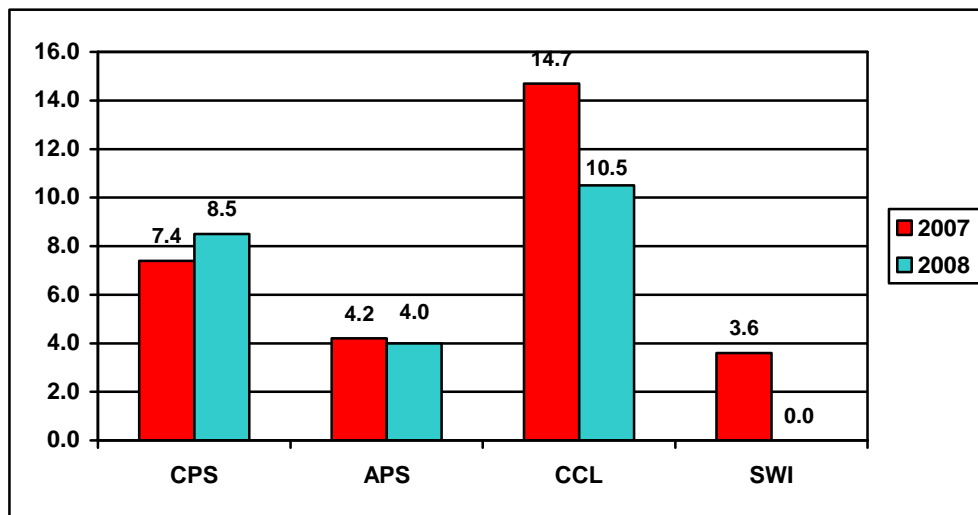
their turnover rate went from 22.3 percent to 18.1 percent. The turnover rate for CCL workers increased from slightly from 15.8 percent to 15.9 percent. SWI workers' turnover rose in FY 2008. SWI experienced a two percentage point increase, from 26.4 percent to 28.4 percent. The turnover rates in FY 2007 and FY 2008 for CPS, APS, CCL and SWI workers are shown in the following chart.

Percentage Turnover for Workers, FY 2007-2008



Supervisors are critical to retention, so knowing how the agency is doing in retaining supervisors is important to the efforts of retaining caseworkers. The turnover rate for CPS supervisors rose from 7.4 percent in FY 2007 to 8.5 percent in FY 2008. Conversely, APS saw a slight decrease in supervisor turnover from 4.2 percent in FY 2007 to 4.0 percent in FY 2008. In CCL, the FY 2008 turnover for supervisors is down from 14.7 percent in FY 2007 to 10.5 percent in FY 2008. No SWI supervisors left the agency in FY 2008, which is down from 3.6 percent in FY 2007. The turnover rates in FY 2007 and FY 2008 for CPS, APS, CCL and SWI supervisors are shown in the following chart.

Percentage Turnover for Program Supervisors, FY 2007-2008



Overall, the turnover data for DFPS is encouraging. The agency's turnover rate decreased from 21.2 percent in FY 2007 to 19.4 percent in FY 2008. The turnover rates for the CPS, APS and CCL programs decreased in FY 2008. SWI saw an increase in turnover. Among workers, the

turnover rates decreased in CPS and APS but increased in CCL and SWI. Turnover decreased among supervisors in APS, CCL and SWI but increased in CPS.

DFPS Analysis of Workforce Retention Challenges

DFPS uses multiple sources of information about why employees leave the agency and why employees stay. Several key sources are described below:

Survey of Organizational Excellence (SOE)

The data gathered through the SOE assists DFPS to understand, from the viewpoint of the employee, what the organization is doing well, where improvement efforts should be targeted, and how employees perceive various aspects of the workplace. The SOE is conducted in state agencies every two years by a research team at the University of Texas and was last administered in February 2008. According to the 2008 SOE results, DFPS employees rated the agency highest in employment development, strategic orientation, external communications, fairness and availability of information. According to the SOE researchers, the high response rate in 2008 – 67 percent – indicates “that employees have an investment in the organization, want to see the organization improve and generally have a sense of responsibility to the organization.”

The State Auditor’s Office (SAO) Survey of Exiting Employees

In 2001, legislation was passed requiring the SAO to develop an online employee exit survey as a direct source for employees to provide feedback about their reasons for leaving state employment. HHS agencies have had some challenges in getting these surveys completed by departing staff, and the data is of somewhat limited use as currently collected and presented by the SAO. DFPS reviews and analyzes all responses received. There were 345 surveys completed in FY 2008.

Qualitative Focus Groups

Over the past two years, the Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, and Executive Team of DFPS have participated in the “Commissioner’s Tour”, conducting multiple site visits to offices in every region of the state. During these meetings, staff are given the opportunity to provide candid feedback about morale and conditions in the agency. Employees are also given opportunities to provide more detailed feedback in structured focus group settings. In the first set of focus groups, retention was the focus for discussion in every region with staff representing all levels of the organization and all DFPS programs.

Independent Studies

A variety of external studies are done on employee retention in the human services field in general and several on DFPS in particular. In the past year, these have included theses and dissertations by Master’s and PhD-level researchers, focused on CPS worker retention.

Out of these various sources of information, a core group of underlying causes for turnover were identified:

Compensation and Reimbursement

According to the 2008 SOE results, more than 64 percent of DFPS employees do not believe that “people are paid fairly for the work they do.” Compared to the 2006 survey, DFPS improved in 19 of 20 constructs measured. “Fair pay” was the only area in which the agency did not show improvement. Concerns about pay are cited as a primary factor for leaving DFPS in 18.3 percent of the FY 2008 SAO exit surveys.

DFPS employees travel more than employees at any other state agency, and bearing those costs up-front is a financial burden for employees. A workgroup separate from the WSRI has been formed to address travel issues. The group is analyzing ways to make the travel voucher auditing and payment processes run more smoothly and is developing tools for employees and supervisors to use when completing travel vouchers. DFPS has also hired seven additional travel voucher auditors.

Support for New Caseworkers

When caseworkers leave DFPS, they typically do so within the first two years of employment. In FY 2008, the turnover rate for entry level CPS workers was 38.3 percent. The turnover rate for entry level APS workers was 31.6 percent. Caseworkers start their jobs in a 12-week training program, and by the end of the first two years, they are functioning with a full caseload. During these two years, learning is constant, and expectations are continually increased. To provide quality service to clients, it is critical that DFPS systematically select caseworkers and equip them to succeed.

Workload Concerns

Many DFPS employees feel overworked. More than 33 percent of respondents to the 2008 SOE survey said that the amount of work they are asked to do is unreasonable. Almost 29 percent felt that their work environment did not support a balance between work and personal life. More than 25 percent did not feel they have the necessary resources to perform their jobs. It is critical to retention that DFPS reduce workload where possible and support employees where reduction is not possible.

Supervision

While supervisor effectiveness as measured by the SOE has improved between the years 2006 and 2008, the researchers still call it an “area of concern.” The turnover rate for CPS supervisors was 8.5 percent in FY 2008. With so many supervisors leaving the agency, caseworkers with management potential must be promoted early in their tenures. Therefore, they may not have the requisite experience that managers and frontline employees prefer. This makes grooming and training potential supervisors all the more important. Continual management training for current supervisors is also critical.

FY 2009 Human Resources Management Plan

Because of the incremental success in FY 2008, the Workforce Support and Retention Initiative (WSRI) will continue in the same structure in FY 2009. Because Rider 13 directs the DFPS to reduce turnover agency-wide and among caseworkers, the projects to be undertaken this year will have a broad scope. The seven work groups within the WSRI will carry on projects from FY 2008 that were not completed and will tackle new challenges. The following table shows the new projects related to each initiative within the WSRI:

FY 2009 Human Resources Management Plan Projects

Initiative	Project
Manage Workloads	Case Distribution – Assigning cases to workers is handled at the local level. The Managing Workloads work group will research and recommend systems to improve the distribution of cases taking into consideration case complexity, number of clients/victims being served and other factors that impact workload.

Manage Workloads	Study Workers with High Caseloads – The work group will study workers who maintain high caseloads to determine if there are short term steps that can be done to improve processes and workload.
Value Employees	Employee Recognition Plan – Recognizing employees is critical to morale and retaining staff. DFPS will develop and implement an employee recognition plan.
Value Employees	Initiating and Maintaining a Sense of Connection – New employees need to feel welcomed when they come to DFPS and valued as they continue employment. The agency will develop and implement strategies for initiating and maintaining employees’ sense of connection with the agency, beginning with new employees in their local supervisory units.
Value Employees	Informing Employees about Perks – Many businesses offer special benefits for particular groups of customers. As government employees, DFPS employees can take advantage of these benefits. DFPS will develop and implement a plan for informing employees about available perks throughout the state. The plan will assign responsibility for maintaining an up-to-date list in each region.
Promote Employee Communications and Input	SOE Projects – The DFPS Executive Team and WSRI work group leaders will put the SOE results to use by initiating a handful of projects directly tied to the workplace issues highlighted in the SOE results.
Promote Employee Communications and Input	Establish WSRI Intranet Page – The WSRI Intranet page will provide information to employees about the WSRI and its activities. The page will also serve as an archive for prior electronic communications to staff regarding retention.
Strengthen Supervision	Tenured Worker Leadership Program – The DFPS Tomorrow Worker Leadership Program has been implemented in all regions except Regions 3 and 6, that will be implemented in FY 2009. This program provides training to frontline workers who want to be promoted into supervisory positions.
Strengthen Supervision	Mentoring Program – DFPS will provide a quality mentoring program for supervisors and caseworkers.
Enhance the Work Environment	Communicating Safety and Security Policies and Procedures – The Enhancing Work Environment work group will establish ongoing communications strategies for safety and security policies and procedures.
Enhance the Work Environment	Mobile Technology – The Enhancing Work Environment work group will review mobile technology survey results for impact/transition issues.
Enhance the Work Environment	Formalize Processes for Flexible Work Schedules – The Enhancing Work Environment work group will finalize a flexible work schedules policy for DFPS executive management approval.
Improve Hiring Practices	Realistic Job Preview – DFPS will produce a realistic job preview video for caseworker positions. Job applicants will watch the video before an interview. Applicants can remove themselves from the hiring process if they decide they no longer want to pursue employment as a caseworker.
Improve Hiring Practices	Scenario-based Skills Test – DFPS will pilot a scenario-based skills test during the hiring process for caseworkers. Primarily, the test exposes applicants to scenarios they will likely face in the field so that the hiring specialist can score how the applicants respond. Secondly, each applicant produces a writing sample.
Improve Hiring Practices	Standardize Testing for Bilingual Pay – Bilingual pay can be used as a recruiting tool for field offices that find it difficult to attract qualified bilingual caseworkers. Regions that offer bilingual pay have different methods for testing an applicant’s proficiency in the second language. DFPS will standardize the way applicants are tested.
Region 8 Retention Pilot	Pilot New Ideas – The Region 8 Retention Pilot serves as an incubator for ideas and innovations that support staff retention. This work group tests new ways of doing business before those policies or processes are taken agency-wide.

Conclusion

Retaining staff is critical for DFPS to achieve its mission of protecting children, the elderly and people with disabilities from abuse, neglect and exploitation by involving clients, families and communities. While turnover is still higher than DFPS would like, the improvement over the last year is encouraging. With the overall improvement in turnover data, DFPS believes it is on the right track with the structure of the Workforce Support and Retention Initiative and the projects of the FY 2009 Human Resources Management Plan. Using this plan, DFPS will continue the efforts of the WSRI by conducting new projects and working towards the goals of improving employee morale and reducing turnover agency-wide.

TURNOVER AND HR-RELATED DATA

RIDER 13 EMPLOYEE TURNOVER REPORT

	Functional Title	Average Employees	Turnover Rate ¹
DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES (DFPS)			
FY 2007	All Employees	9233.00	21.2%
FY 2008		10439.3	19.4%
CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES (CPS)			
FY 2007	CPS Workers	3752.0	34.1%
FY 2008		4250.0	30.5%
FY 2007	CPS Supervisors	742.8	7.4%
FY 2008		833.8	8.5%
FY 2007	CPS Program ³	6580.0	23.8%
FY 2008		7501.3	21.7%
FY 2007	CPS Specialist II ²	2206.5	40.8%
FY 2008		2634.0	38.3%
FY 2007	CPS Specialist III	634.3	27.7%
FY 2008		789.5	19.1%
FY 2007	CPS Specialist IV	680.8	16.7%
FY 2008		598.5	11.0%
FY 2007	CPS Specialist V	28.8	20.9%
FY 2008		26.5	11.3%
FY 2007	CPS Special Investigator	201.8	41.1%
FY 2008		201.5	34.2%
FY 2007	CPS CVS Caseworker	1192.0	33.8%
FY 2008		1384.0	30.9%
FY 2007	CPS FBSS Caseworker	543.8	27.4%
FY 2008		642.3	27.9%
FY 2007	CPS INV Caseworker	1479.5	40.7%
FY 2008		1636.5	36.1%
ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES (APS)			
FY 2007	APS Workers	628.5	22.3%
FY 2008		658.3	18.1%
FY 2007	APS Supervisors	95.0	4.2%
FY 2008		99.3	4.0%
FY 2007	APS Program ³	863.5	17.7%
FY 2008		905.5	15.2%

CHILD CARE LICENSING (CCL)

FY 2007	CCL Workers	336.5	15.8%
FY 2008		262.0	15.9%
FY 2007	CCL Supervisors	47.8	14.7%
FY 2008		36.0	10.5%
FY 2007	CCL Program ³	466.8	15.4%
FY 2008		358.8	14.2%

STATEWIDE INTAKE (SWI)

FY 2007	SWI Workers	245.8	26.4%
FY 2008		253.3	28.4%
FY 2007	SWI Supervisors	28.0	3.6%
FY 2008		30.3	0.0%
FY 2007	SWI Program ³	329.5	20.0%
FY 2008		340.3	23.8%

¹NOTE: DFPS turnover is calculated using the method required by the LBB performance measure for CPS caseworker turnover: (the total number of full time, regular employees who terminated during the period and remain terminated DIVIDED BY the average number of full time, regular active employees on the last day of each quarter in the period) TIMES 100 to produce a percentage. As a result, the State Auditor's Office turnover calculation varies slightly from DFPS due to methodological differences in calculating the average number of active employees and the total number of terminated employees.

²Entry level for CPS workers is CPS Specialist II. The state classification for this level is Protective Services Specialist II.

³Because program group totals include **all** employees in that program, this number will exceed the total number of workers and supervisors in the program.