

**House Bill 1, Rider 9**  
**84th Legislature, Regular Session**  
**Human Resources Management Plan**

**FY 2016 - FY 2017**

**June 1, 2017**



**TEXAS**

Department of Family  
and Protective Services

## DFPS MISSION

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The mission of The Texas 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.

## DFPS VISION

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The Department of Family and Protective Services:

- Is recognized for innovative, effective services.
- Builds strong, effective partnerships with clients, communities, and state leaders.
- Provides effective leadership that is accountable for its actions and communicates openly with clients and stakeholders.
- Supports staff who are highly motivated, diverse, ethical, well trained, and professional.

## DFPS VALUES

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At The Department of Family and Protective Services:

- We protect the unprotected.
- We involve clients, families and communities in decision-making.
- We provide quality services.
- We are innovative and strive for excellence.
- We are ethical and accountable.
- We promote diversity.
- We value our staff.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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House Bill 1 (H.B. 1), Rider 9, of the 84th Legislature, Regular Session, 2015 directs the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) to develop a Human Resources Management Plan (HRMP) detailing strategic initiatives designed to improve employee morale and retention as well as reduce employee turnover through better management. H.B. 1 also requires DFPS to report employee turnover rates by job category for the preceding 12 months to the Senate Finance Committee, the House Committee on Appropriations, the Legislative Budget Board, and the Governor on a semi-annual basis.

This report covers agency progress from Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 to FY 2017 year to date (YTD) and describes FY 2017 strategies. It provides information on employee concerns about their jobs, feedback on improving the agency, and empirical data reflecting changes occurring within the agency's workforce. An update on the additional funding (Critical Needs) provided to DFPS to stabilize Child Protective Services (CPS) by immediately hiring additional CPS caseworkers and increasing pay for certain CPS direct delivery staff in FY 2017 is provided in [Appendix A](#).

The information in this report provides the foundation for current and future strategic recommendations. The report is organized by agency objectives that focus on addressing employee concerns with working environment and examining employee concerns with compensation. Other information such as turnover and retention findings, SAO and SEE Survey data, and efforts related to worker safety, recruitment, and retention are also included. The agency's goal is to address these concerns to improve employee job satisfaction, reduce agency turnover, and increase the number of tenured workers to better serve clients and families. Going forward, DFPS will work towards restructuring the evaluation of workforce related data with an emphasis on outcomes to better assist DFPS executive leadership in

focusing on activities that stabilize the workforce. SWI has received the Best Place to Work in Austin by the Austin American Statesman's Award twice and has received the Stevie Award for best Customer Service.

The numerous activities and initiatives currently in progress at DFPS, including but not limited to critical needs hiring, supervisor candidate assessments, expanded training requirements and increased training opportunities, and numerous agency wide and program level retention efforts are evidence of the full commitment of the agency's executive leadership to ensuring that our workforce is fully capable of providing exceptional services to Texans in need. While many of the activities and initiatives are relatively new and the full benefits have yet to be realized, the agency is confident that we will soon see the positive impact of these efforts. Leadership at DFPS will continue to closely examine the trends in our workforce data across the agency to ensure that we see dividends from the resources provided to us.

# TURNOVER AND RETENTION FINDINGS

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Details on turnover and retention findings are provided in [Appendix B](#). Details on agency and program tenure are provided in [Appendix C](#).

The Department of Family Protective Services (DFPS) is one of Texas's largest governmental agencies, with nearly 12,000 employees. According to the Texas State Auditor's Office Report No. 17-704, Classified Employee Turnover for Fiscal Year 2016, the statewide turnover rate was 17.6 percent. DFPS falls generally in line with the statewide turnover rate.

It should be noted that the movement of staff from one DFPS position to another, also known as turmoil has no impact on turnover calculations. However, the internal moves associated with demotions, lateral transfers or promotions leave a workload and vacant position that must be filled. As an example, 54 staff transferred into or between CPS positions between December 1, 2016 and February 27, 2017, one third of which came from a DFPS program outside of CPS. Approximately 44 of the transferring staff (81 percent) were moves into CPS positions eligible for the targeted salary increase, and 47 of the transferring staff (87 percent) did in fact receive an immediate salary increase.

## **DFPS Turnover and Retention Findings**

- DFPS has reported a 6.7 percent decrease in turnover at the agency-level (FY16 19.3% to FY17 18%)
- On average for FY 2017 YTD, for all DFPS Employees, roughly 42 percent have five or more years of tenure.

## **CPS Turnover and Retention Findings**

- FY 2017 YTD annualized turnover (20.7%) is meeting the H.B.1 performance measure for worker turnover of 25.5 percent.
- FY 2017 YTD annualized turnover for CPS workers has:

- Decreased 16 percent since FY 2016 for CVS caseworkers, (FY16 22.60% to FY17 19.00%);
- Decreased 22 percent since FY 2016 for FBSS caseworkers, (FY16 25.00% to FY17 19.50%);
- Decreased 18 percent since FY 2016 for INV caseworkers, (FY16 32.90% to FY17 27.10%).
- FY 2017 YTD annualized turnover for CPS supervisors has decreased 3.6 percent (FY16 10.4% to FY17 10.1%), and 13.8 percent (FY16 20.4% to FY17 17.6%) for CPS program as a whole.
- On average for FY 2017 YTD, for CVS, INV and FBSS, roughly 50 percent of the workers have 2 or more years of tenure.

### **APS Turnover and Retention Findings**

- FY 2017 YTD annualized turnover (25.7%) is above the H.B.1 performance measure for fiscal year 2017 APS caseworker turnover of 20 percent.
- FY 2017 YTD annualized turnover for APS workers (25.70%) has increased 21 percent since FY 2016 (21.20%).
- FY 2017 YTD annualized turnover for APS supervisors has decreased 74.9 percent (FY16 7.2% to FY17 1.8%) and 17.1 percent (FY16 18.7% to FY17 21.9%) for APS program as a whole.
- On average for FY 2017 YTD, roughly 51 percent of APS Facility and roughly 63 percent APS In-Home workers have 2 or more years of tenure.

### **Licensing Turnover and Retention Findings**

- DCL and RCCL do not have H.B. 1 caseworker turnover targets.
- FY 2017 YTD annualized turnover for Licensing workers has:
  - Decreased 18 percent since FY 2016 for DCL caseworkers (FY16 20.2% to FY17 16.6%).
  - Increased 53 percent since FY 2016 for RCCL caseworkers (FY16 14.1% to FY17 21.5%).

- FY 2017 YTD annualized turnover for DCCL supervisors has decreased 66.1 percent (FY16 13% to FY17 4.4%) and 4.7 percent for RCCL supervisors (FY16 6.6% to FY17 6.3%).
- FY 2017 YTD annualized turnover for DCCL program has decreased 9.1 percent (FY16 %17.3 to FY17 15.7%) and increased 56.1 percent (FY16 11.4% to FY17 17.7%) for RCCL program.
- On average for FY 2017 YTD, roughly 62 percent of DCCL and roughly 66 percent of CCL workers have 2 or more years of tenure.

### **SWI Turnover and Retention Findings**

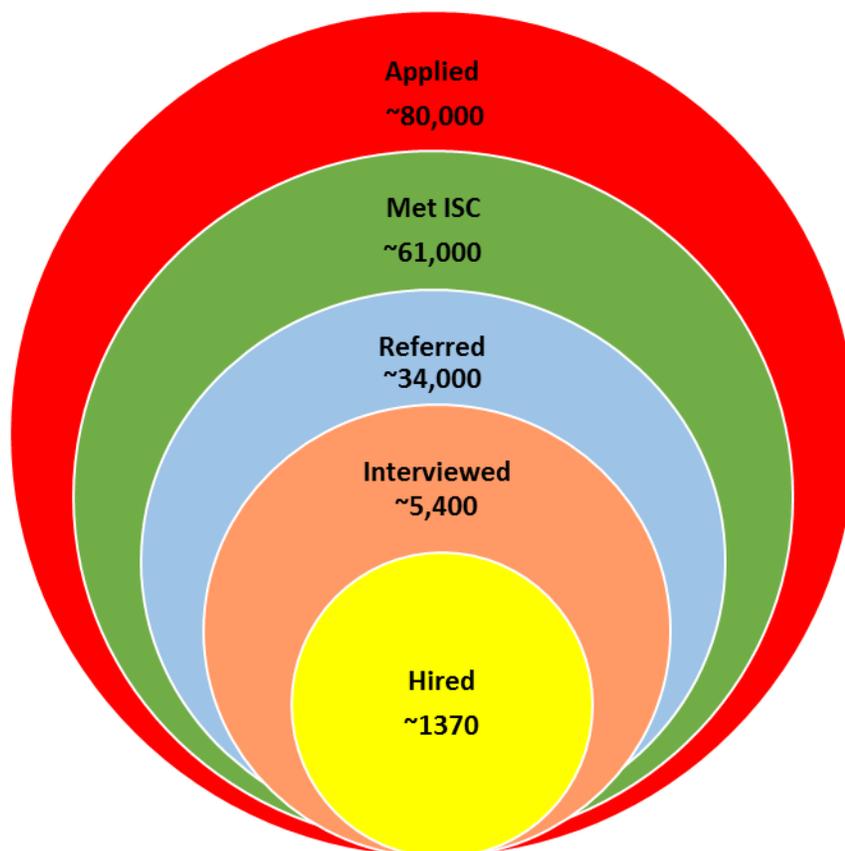
- SWI does not have H.B. 1 caseworker turnover targets.
- FY 2017 YTD annualized turnover for SWI workers has decreased 36 percent since FY 2016 (FY16 19.4% to FY17 12.4%).
- FY 2017 YTD annualized turnover for SWI supervisors has increased 3.5 percent (FY16 10.9% to FY17 11.3%) and decreased 25.9 percent (FY16 16.9% to FY17 12.5%) for SWI program as a whole.
- On average for FY 2017 YTD, roughly 72 percent of SWI workers have 2 or more years of tenure.

# Hiring and Fill Rates

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The Talent Acquisition Group (TAG) supports recruiting and hiring activities within the programs. In addition to participating in active and passive recruitment activities, TAG processes applications by screening, interviewing, and hiring applicants to fill direct delivery program positions. TAG also supports quality control services related to application processing and provides technical support related to DFPS HR policy interpretation and on-boarding new employees in the Centralized Accounting and Payroll/Personnel System (CAPPS.)

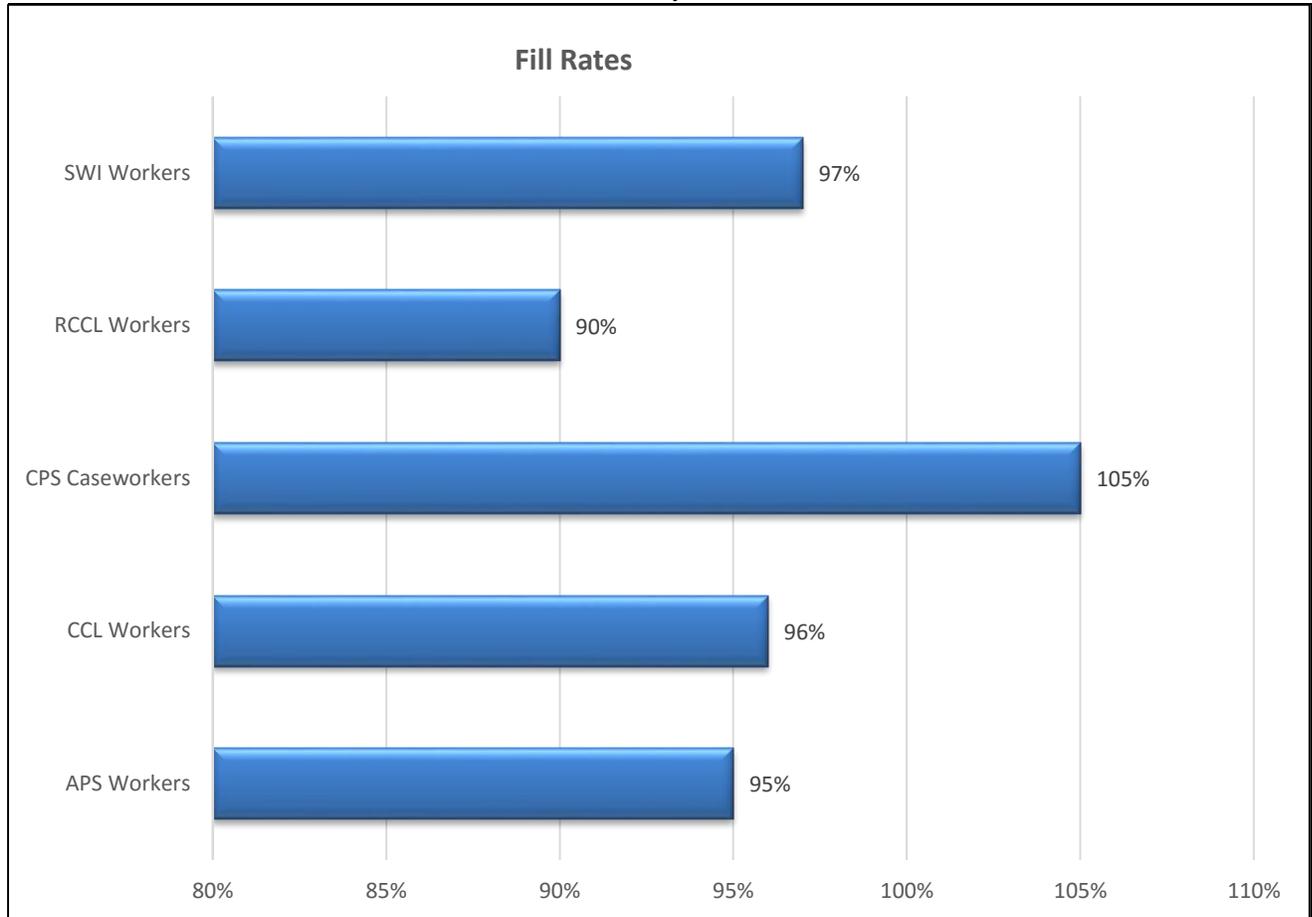
**FIGURE 1: FY17 YTD DFPS HIRING FUNNEL**



As indicated in Figure 1 (above), TAG received over 80,000 direct-delivery applications by the end of the second quarter of fiscal year 2017. Roughly 61,000

(75.9%) met the initial screening criteria (ISC). Of those, only an estimated 34,000 (55.4%) also completed the required screening assessment for competency and were subsequently moved forward in the hiring consideration process. An estimated 5,400 applicants were interviewed and approximately 1,370 (4%) were hired into available vacant positions.

**FIGURE 2: FY17 Q2 Fill Rates**



The fill rates at the end of the second quarter of fiscal year 2017 are reflected in Figure 2 above. As a result of the critical needs funding the agency received to hire additional CPS caseworkers and other staff, the fill rates in CPS exceed 100 percent of the appropriated levels. The agency did not receive additional FTE authority to hire additional staff.

The agency monitors caseworker fill rates to evaluate the need for additional resources or a shift in hiring strategies to prevent unnecessary delays in filling positions. The number of filled FTE's is an indicator of the health of the programs because higher vacancies can lead to higher caseloads which can in turn degrade services to families. The direct-delivery hiring model implemented during FY 2016 has proven to be effective in maintaining or, in some cases, improving caseworker fill-rates by reducing the time required to complete the candidate assessment process.

# STATE AUDITOR'S OFFICE (SAO) EXIT SURVEY

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## **DFPS and Program SAO Employee Exit Survey Analysis**

Employees voluntarily separating from DFPS employment are asked by the State Auditor's Office (SAO) to complete an exit survey of questions surrounding their decision to leave the agency. DFPS studies the results of the ongoing SAO employee exit surveys to identify and focus on the reasons employees separated from the agency. For FY 2015 and FY 2016 employees reported the same top three reasons for separating from the agency:

- Poor working conditions or environment (i.e., safety, work-related stress, and workload issues)
- Issues with my supervisor or issues with employees I supervise
- Better pay or benefits

In the two quarters of FY 2017 employees reported their primary reasons for separating from the agency as:

### FY 2017 1st Quarter

- Poor working conditions or environment (i.e., safety, work-related stress, and workload issues)
- Issues with my supervisor or issues with employees I supervise
- Better pay or benefits

### FY 2017 2nd Quarter

- Poor working conditions or environment (i.e., safety, work-related stress, and workload issues)
- Better pay or benefits
- Retirement

# SURVEY OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT (SEE)

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## **FY 2016 SEE Results**

The Survey of Employee Engagement is a biannual survey required by Senate Bill 1563 for Texas state agencies, nonprofit organizations, and businesses to help leaders and managers understand how their employees feel about their work, their workplace, and their employers.

The survey is intended to help leadership in state agencies by providing information about workforce issues that affect service delivery, including performance, burnout, quality, retention, etc. The survey is an opportunity for agency leaders to garner substantive information regarding our workforce and engage in organizational improvement efforts.

### **Levels of Engagement:**

According to FY 2016 DFPS Survey of Employee Engagement (SEE) results, which had a 64.9 percent response rate, the following employee engagement levels were reported within DFPS:

- 19 percent of employees are highly engaged;
- 25 percent are engaged;
- 41 percent are moderately engaged; and
- 15 percent are disengaged.

Highly engaged employees are willing to go above and beyond in their employment. Engaged employees are more present in the workplace and show an effort to help out. Moderately engaged employees are physically present, but put minimal effort towards accomplishing the job. Disengaged employees are disinterested in their jobs and may be actively working against their co-workers.

For comparison purposes, according to nationwide polling data, about 30 percent of employees are highly engaged or engaged, 50 percent are moderately engaged, and 20 percent are disengaged.

The SEE results include descriptions of the agency's strengths and areas of concern. The scoring is based on a scale of 100 to 500. Scores that typically range from 300 to 400 with a score of 350 serving as a "tipping point" between positive and negative perceptions. For FY 2016 the DFPS Survey of Employee Engagement (SEE) results reported the following strengths and weaknesses:

### **Areas of Strength**

- **Supervision Score: 398** - The supervision construct captures employees' perceptions of the nature of supervisory relationships within the organization. Higher scores suggest that employees view their supervisors as fair, helpful, and critical to the flow of work.
- **Information Systems Score: 392** - The information systems construct captures employees' perceptions of whether computer and communication systems prove accessible, accurate, and clear information. This construct measures the degree to which employees view the availability and utility of information positively.
- **Workgroup Score: 390** - The workgroup construct captures employees' perceptions of the people they work with on a daily basis and how effective they are. This construct measures the degree to which employees view their workgroup as effective, cohesive and open to the opinions of all members.

### **Areas of Concern**

- **Pay Score: 211** - The pay construct captures employees' perceptions about how well the compensation package offered by the organization holds up when compared to similar jobs in other organizations. Lower scores suggest that pay is a central concern or reason for discontent and is not comparable to similar organizations.
- **Job Satisfaction Score: 334** - The job satisfaction construct captures employees' perceptions about the overall work situation and ability to maintain work-life balance. Lower scores suggest that employees feel overworked, unable to perform at their best and unhappy with their work.
- **Benefits Score: 351** - The benefits construct captures employees' perceptions of how the benefits package compares to packages at similar organizations and how flexible it is. This construct measures the degree to which employees see health insurance and retirement benefits as competitive with similar jobs in the community.

# CONCERNS WITH WORKING ENVIRONMENT

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As previously mentioned, major themes of concern from current and former employees included concerns with working conditions, management-employee relations, and job satisfaction. Strategies addressing working environment concerns are presented using the following headlines to organize DFPS operations: *recruiting and hiring, professional development, worker safety, and retention.*

## RECRUITING AND HIRING

DFPS continues to use marketing statements for direct-delivery job postings to promote the agency's unique competitive advantage by highlighting the benefits of state employment, such as qualifying for the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) Program, comprehensive health benefits, an employee discount program, 401(k) and 457 programs, and an actuarially sound state employee retirement system. To improve the working environment through the recruiting and hiring process, DFPS explored a number of strategies.

### **Strategy 1: Automate Reference Checks for Vendor-Screened Positions**

A process was developed and implemented that allowed the vendor to conduct reference checks using an automated system that solicits the candidate's references during the screening process through an online resource.

The new process did not prove to be effective and was discontinued in the third quarter of fiscal year 2017. Applicants were reluctant to provide supervisor contact information while they were in the screening stage because they didn't know at that point if they were competitive. The candidates perceived this as an unnecessary risk with their current employer.

The Talent Acquisition Group (TAG) also found little value in the new process. The contact information provided up front didn't yield useful results and staff ended up making follow up calls to have a conversation with current or former supervisors after high value candidates had been identified.

### **Strategy 2: Develop Stage-Specific Caseworker Interview Questions**

TAG hiring specialists continue to use a standardized set of generalized behavioral based caseworker interview questions. The goal of adding a subset of questions tailored to staff specializing in different stages of service is to augment existing interviewing practices and help hiring specialists and hiring managers determine candidate fit in a more practical and objective manner.

TAG and program representatives developed a proposed set of stage-specific questions near the end of the first quarter of fiscal year 2017. Implementation of the additional questions was postponed at the beginning of the second quarter due to the expedited hiring requirements related to critical needs positions. TAG was responsible to hire an additional 450 new caseworker positions from December 2016 to May 2017. The revised implementation date for integrating stage-specific interview questions is by the end of fiscal year 2017.

### **Strategy 3: Supervisor Candidate Assessment Process**

The agency implemented a competency assessment for prospective CPS Supervisors. The assessment tests a candidate's competency in areas such as casework, leadership, and human resources. A passing score will be required in order to apply for a CPS Supervisor position. CPS implemented the assessment process in May 2017. DFPS is developing competency assessments for supervisors in other programs in the agency. The expected implementation for these additional assessments is fiscal year 2018.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The DFPS Center for Learning and Organizational Excellence (CLOE) provides professional development and training to all DFPS staff. CLOE ensures that agency workers and staff are prepared to perform their assigned tasks with ease and in such a way as to ensure their own safety as well as the safety and satisfaction of our clients and families. To improve the working environment through Professional Development, DFPS explored a number of strategies.

### **Strategy 4: CPS Professional Development Training Model (CPD)**

In January 2015, the agency gradually began to implement a restructured training, learning, and development model for new CPS caseworkers. This new Child Protective Services Professional Development Training Model (CPD) focuses on building caseworker competencies and includes classroom training, field based training (experiential learning), and mentoring. There is a customizable training plan for each new worker in their first nine months on the job and case assignability is based on their demonstration of competencies.

CPD's early exposure to field based training has proven effective with staff reporting they feel better prepared for their job and supervisors reporting staff are better prepared to manage their workload. With CPD, new caseworkers get a realistic understanding of their job responsibilities early in their tenure to ensure they are a good match for the job. CPD also helps to create a culture of continuous learning that facilitates faster integration of new caseworkers into their unit, and allows supervisors to better assess and support new caseworkers which appears to be supporting improvements in retention.

### **Strategy 5: Update CPS Supervisor Basic Skills Development (BSD)**

DFPS worked to update CPS Supervisor BSD to incorporate more training on managing teams, program administration, and fostering a culture of retention. The training builds upon the new Supervisor Candidate Assessment Process to ensure those selected receive the appropriate training to effectively supervise and support staff. The updated BSD establishes systems control measures ensuring consistent and standardized training practices statewide and deepens supervisor knowledge on effective team and time management, program administration, and team-level retention efforts.

The revised Supervisor BSD training is one training component of the new CPS two-year training program and was implemented in January 2017. The new CPS Supervisor Training Model includes a combination of online, classroom, and on-the-job (provided by a Field Advisor) training. Since January 2017, eight sessions of Supervisor BSD have been offered and 157 supervisors have participated. Anecdotally, there has been positive feedback regarding the program, with the first cohort now in their sixth month in a supervisory role.

### **Strategy 6: APS Professional Development Training Model (Basic Skills Development)**

Core competencies were developed by APS program and Center for Learning and Organizational Excellence (CLOE) to describe the high level functions workers and investigators must competently perform in order to perform the core functions of their jobs. Training on core competencies and skills can ensure that the skill sets necessary for APS to fulfill our mission are properly conveyed to workers. APS Provider Investigations and In-Home program areas completed updating all of the basic skills (BSD) training program assessments to the continuous development of APS staff by including skilled workers, and management and supervisors with the

information, tools, and resources needed to provide high quality support to trainees throughout BSD.

During field training the trainee shadows and then actively performs core skills with a skilled APS investigator or specialist while conducting investigations and service delivery. The BSD program provides individual training plans and consists of five to nine weeks of field training, two weeks of classroom training, at least four weeks of closely supervised casework which requires a minimum caseload, and an additional one week of advanced classroom training. Policies and procedures are incorporated so that actual cases are used throughout the training programs.

### **Strategy 7: Other Frontline Staff and Supervisor Trainings**

Effective development of caseworkers is an ongoing process that requires a broad range of training opportunities to meet the variety of challenges caseworkers encounter. Caseworker competency is strengthened by training, experience, and effective supervision. DFPS is committed to supporting the development of caseworkers with training that provides a theoretical and practical framework for delivering high quality and effective case management to clients and families.

DFPS has developed a diverse collection of ongoing trainings to support CPS caseworkers such as: *Normalcy for Children in Foster Care; Emergency Assistance Eligibility; Forensic Interviewing; Building Resilience in the Face of Secondary Trauma; Disproportionality Webinar Series; Growing Our Practice to Grow Safer Families (Practice Model); Single Case Plan; Family Based Safety Services Pilot; Integrated Care Coordination; IMPACT Modernization; Working with Impoverished Families; Poverty Simulation; Coaching Training with Dr. Mikow; Alternative Response; Risk Reassessment and Family Reunification; and Structured Decision Making.*

DFPS is also developing additional support training for APS workers, which includes additional training such as: *Person Centered Practices; Investigative Interviewing; Telephone Interviewing; Grasping and Analyzing Provider Investigative Skills;* and updates to *APS Supervisor Basic Skills Development (BSD)*.

DFPS is aware that poor supervision creates losses within the agency that range from increased risks to clients and workers to sunken costs in the agency's financial resources. Recognizing the importance of supporting supervisors in the development of their leadership skills, DFPS has developed dozens of new or revised trainings geared to address the unique needs and challenges supervisors face.

These trainings include courses such as: *DFPS Beginning Manager-Transitioning from Peer to Manager; Developing Your Workers' Critical Thinking Skills; Building Resilience in the Face of Secondary Trauma; Strengths-Based Supervision for DFPS Leaders; Mentor Teaching and Feedback; Intermediate Strategic Data Management; Coaching Training by Dr. Mikow; Advanced Strategic Management; Cultural Change and High Performance Teams Training; Developing Work Competency; Supervising for Retention;* and *Understanding Generations in the Workplace*.

DFPS believes investing in our workers through ongoing training will result in improved productivity, better decision making, and a safer work environment. Long term this should improve retention and build tenure leading to better outcomes for the children and adults we serve.

### **Strategy 8: SWI Professional Development Training Model (Basic Skills Development)**

In CY 2016 the Basic Skills Development Core competencies were re-evaluated and

re-designed by the SWI program to ensure program readiness and effectiveness. A thorough task skills analysis was conducted on major functions for Intake Specialists to ensure course relevancy and accuracy. Redundancies in the program were identified and remedied, and the training process and delivery was improved through the infusion of technology. As a result, the total classroom training time for BSD was reduced by 8 hours while simultaneously strengthening the on-the-job training component.

### **Strategy 9: Other SWI Trainings**

SWI operates 24 hours per day, 365 days of the year which makes certain training formats difficult to implement on a large scale. In the past year, SWI managed this challenge by conducting over 200 various training events as presentations, facilitations, webinars, and computer based training (CBT) sessions serving over 2000 attendees and providing more than 31,000 training hours. SWI includes trainings on general topics such as developing critical thinking skills, improving listening and documentation skills, and creating awareness of mental health first-aid, suicide intervention resources, and generational differences in the workplace.

The SWI training also includes specialized topics to educate Intake Specialists on effective interviewing techniques, Child Safety, School Reports, Baby Moses Reports, Family Violence, Concerns in Foster Homes, and Assessing for Human Trafficking. In addition to specific trainings, SWI created a Digital Library which includes internal and external training resources and over 150 free learning opportunities.

### **Strategy 10: 360 Leadership Assessments for Agency Leaders**

The 360 Leadership Assessments provide information to participants allowing them to focus on job and leadership related skills. These skills are necessary to strengthen and enhance the professional development of managers and supervisors across the

agency. DFPS piloted an evaluation of 64 Program Directors or Administrators using the 360 Leadership Assessments from October through December 2016. The assessments provided timely feedback of leadership influence on employee job satisfaction and working environment and provided a baseline on existing cultural norms within the cohort.

The 360 Leadership Assessments identified existing leadership strengths as well as opportunities to improve leadership gaps. DFPS will implement an agency wide 360 Leadership Assessment of approximately 1,600 agency leaders, currently scheduled to begin near the end of June 2017.

### **Strategy 11: Partner with Schools of Social Work to Improve Caseworker Training**

DFPS initiated the creation of a Training Advisory Committee comprised of members from Universities that grant social work degrees. The goal was to establish a Committee that could make recommendations regarding emerging practices in the social work field that could be incorporated into CPS caseworker training curriculum. Additional benefits of the committee would be the establishment of a systems control measure to ensure the agency reviews and updates direct-delivery training as well as providing a quality control measure for direct-delivery training by leveraging social work subject matter experts in the review and development of state employee training.

A number of schools of Social Work participants were invited to sit on an advisory committee charged with reviewing CPS curriculum. DFPS shared the plan to gather the names of interested participants and have the first organizational meeting in February 2017. The project was put on hold in January 2017 due to agency issues with resource availability to lead the committee. DFPS still considers this activity

valuable and will reengage stakeholders and partners when appropriate resources are identified.

## **WORKER SAFETY**

DFPS is committed to ensuring that our staff are able to effectively execute their assigned duties in an environment with the least amount of risk to their personal wellbeing as possible. Data obtained from exit surveys and anecdotal information received by executive staff indicate that safety is a staff concern. The agency has implemented the following strategies to address safety issues.

### **Strategy 12: Expand Worker Safety Support Efforts**

The DFPS Office of Worker Safety Support expanded its efforts to all regions and DFPS Programs on May 1, 2017. The Worker Safety Team provides intensive support for management to help navigate client threats. The team has provided intensive support for over 150 incidents to date in fiscal year 2017. The team supported 146 incidents during the program pilot in fiscal year 2016. The Worker Safety Team supports the field by providing coordination between all involved parties including CPS field staff and management, clients, law enforcement, and HHSC facility and risk management staff.

### **Strategy 13: Expand SafeSignal Statewide**

DFPS launched the statewide use of the SafeSignal caseworker safety instant alert system in December 2016, with distribution to 7,847 staff statewide as of April 30, 2017. The emergency system works through a locked iPhone and allows a caseworker to send a distress signal to a monitoring center 24/7/365 days a year. Training has now moved into ongoing maintenance and support of new supervisors.

### **Strategy 14: Expand Safety-Related Training**

The DFPS Office of Worker Safety Support continues to deliver in-person training to all new supervisors, including guidance on supporting their staff with safety concerns and how to quickly and effectively reach safety support resources. These presentations are a part of the supervisor training curriculums conducted by the Center for Learning and Organizational Excellence (CLOE). Worker Safety Support now also provides in-person, phone and webinar presentations to regional staff and management upon request.

### **RETENTION**

To meet the needs of the clients and families served by DFPS the agency must retain the employees we recruit and train. Most DFPS employees work closely with the public and often the work can occur under a sense of urgency and in an emotionally charged environment. It is our goal to retain staff who have the necessary skills, experience, training, and resilience to succeed in this work environment. In order to be successful, staff must have access to high quality resources, tools, and training. It is paramount they have the support they need to effectively do their jobs in supporting children and vulnerable adults, while at the same time supporting their own well-being and safety. To improve the working environment through Retention, DFPS explored a number of strategies in the following areas:

- Better Support for Employees;
- Improved Recognition of Staff Contributions; and
- Increased Staff Engagement.

## Better Support for Employees

### **Strategy 15: Expand Employee Wellness Benefits and Activities**

DFPS offers the Deer Oaks Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to staff and their dependents. This program offers a wide variety of counseling, referrals, and consultation services, which are all designed to assist employees and their families with resolving work/life issues in order to live happier, healthier, more balanced lives. Between September 1, 2016 and February 28, 2017, there were 687 requests for counseling services and 113 requests for other services such as referrals for legal and tax related assistance. Utilization of services for this time period has increased from 5.5 percent to 6.5 percent with the projected annual utilization for DFPS at 13.0 percent.

During this time period, wellness staff coordinated numerous regional wellness events such as weight loss programs, vaccinations and blood drives, and fitness and healthy living related activities

### **Strategy 16: C.A.R.E. Support Program**

DFPS is committed to providing a peer support resource known as the Compassion, Assistance, Recovery and Encouragement, or C.A.R.E. Support Program. The goal of the support program is to ensure that agency staff knows that DFPS cares about their well-being and recovery and supports their family when a tragedy or crisis occurs, such as the death of a loved one, loss of their home due to a natural disaster, or health issues.

Peer support refers to a form of emotional, social, and practical support provided by a person who has knowledge from their own similar experience, or previous experience supporting others in a similar situation. The support could include activities such as phone calls, home visits, running errands, or coordinating

communication to alleviate stress during the crisis. This program will be implemented in FY 2018 once processes, roles, and responsibilities have been fully established.

### **Strategy 17: Performance Evaluations**

It is imperative that staff consistently receive timely feedback on their performance. Until recently, the lengthy performance evaluation form was a barrier to staff formally receiving this feedback in a useful and well-timed manner. In February 2017, the DFPS performance evaluation tool was streamlined down to a couple of pages to support managers in providing timely feedback to staff regarding their strengths and areas where improvement is needed.

### **Strategy 18: Statewide Intake (SWI) Support**

SWI initiated a support process initially geared towards retention. The process focuses on continuous improvement in the workplace that prompts effective change through collaboration and communication. Support for this effort includes staff volunteers from the day and night shifts as well as the weekend teams. All staff are surveyed a few times each year, then Managers and leads meet with the volunteers often to discuss concerns, address gaps in resources or policies, and develop solutions that improve employee working conditions. There is a summer workgroup that also focuses on morale and retention. These efforts ensure staff receive the supports they need to perform effectively and efficiently in the call center environment.

### **Strategy 19: PEI Restructure**

PEI merged with Texas Home Visiting, effective May 1, 2016. Based on observations and feedback regarding staff concerns for needed support, PEI is developing a plan for program reorganization to address employee workload concerns, strengthen the

availability of staff support resources, increase accountability for managers, and improve the overall work environment in an effort to address high turnover in the division. PEI expects this re-organization to provide better supervision, development and support opportunities for the staff and a more reasonable division of workloads. PEI's goal is to decrease disruptions and frustrations with work assignments and increase job satisfaction, employee morale, and retention. PEI will implement this request upon approval of a pending grant in early FY 2108.

### **Strategy 20: Succession Planning**

Succession planning is a process that allows an organization to ensure employees are trained and developed to potentially replace staff in higher positions. Its goal is to build internal resources throughout the agency to ensure the agency retains critical or important knowledge when current tenured staff resign or retire.

Succession planning is not to be confused with replacement planning, which is more closely aligned to having a "back-up" when employees are out sick or on annual leave.

Sunset recommendation 2.10 proposed DFPS develop a Succession Plan to prepare for anticipated and unanticipated departures of key management staff, beginning with State Office leadership positions. Agency leadership was instructed to identify positions critical to DFPS operations and establish a comprehensive strategy for effectively preparing staff with the skills or knowledge to assume these roles and responsibilities. Critical vacant positions and positions at risk of becoming vacant in the near future have been identified, and DFPS is developing a process to provide training and development opportunities to employees suited to possibly compete for these positions in the future. Succession Planning will remain ongoing through FY 2017 and FY 2018.

## **Improved Recognition of Staff Contributions**

### **Strategy 21: Commissioner's Proud to Protect Staff Recognition Ceremony**

DFPS holds a monthly event to celebrate emerging leaders of the agency and honor those who are doing extraordinary work within DFPS or in partnership with the agency. There are three awards in this program:

- The Commissioner's Award of Excellence recognizes staff members and external partners who have gone to extraordinary lengths to protect the unprotected and serve our stakeholders.
- The DFPS Team Integrity Award recognizes a program, unit, or team that has demonstrated exceptional teamwork for the agency and produced an extraordinary outcome.
- The DFPS Award of Distinction recognizes regional staff members from each DFPS program across the state.

Nominated employees selected for the awards and employees who were recently promoted are invited to attend and be recognized, and honored staff are encouraged to invite their families to attend with them. The staff also have a tour of DFPS State Office to meet the teams who support them every day. Photos from the event are shared in a newsletter article to all DFPS staff and posted on the DFPS website every month.

### **Strategy 22: Regional and Local Staff Recognition**

APS, CCL, CPS, and SWI all have a variety of staff recognition activities which are conducted at the regional or local office levels. Program Leadership in each division participate in appreciation events that range from statewide division awards to local office recognitions. These include awards for achievements in service, excellence,

good deeds, dedication and commitment, core values, and tenure. These awards recognize caseworkers, frontline staff, administrative staff, and other staff support resources and are shared through local office walls of fame, community rooms, email broadcasts, and agency newsletters. Other appreciation efforts include celebrations, volunteer activities, external engagements, and other morale boosting or team building activities.

### **Strategy 23: Anniversary Notices**

The DFPS Commissioner sends a short, personalized note to the staff, acknowledging the employee's anniversary date with the agency and thanking them for their service and contributions to the agency. These personalized notes create a supportive culture and improve staff morale by recognizing their commitment to their work, thanking them for their efforts, and appreciating their tenure with the agency.

## **Increased Staff Engagement**

### **Strategy 24: Promoting CPS Communication and Input**

CPS is working towards a culture that is positive and supportive. Obtaining and maintaining this goal requires sustained improvements in communication, including engaging staff for feedback when changes are proposed or occur. CPS has improved communication through increases in visibility with staff at town hall style meetings and employee advisory committees. Regional Directors contact new staff frequently and encourage feedback that generates new ideas from their fresh perspective. Directors make regular visits to offices across their region to facilitate communication, share information, recognize positive staff contributions and become familiar with staff throughout the region including their experiences and development as CPS workers.

### **Strategy 25: Child Care Licensing (CCL) Newsletter**

CCL releases a monthly newsletter (The CCL Chronicles) to increase communication, provide targeted training through short but engaging articles, and build a strong sense of community within the CCL program statewide.

A wide range of information is shared with staff from legislative updates to policy refreshers and staff responded positively to the information sharing. Staff indicate they enjoying the articles, finding the content informative, and they feel more connected to the program and leadership.

### **Strategy 26: PEI Meetings and Work Retreat**

PEI held a staff retreat in the fall of 2016 where staff participated in training for leadership skills, developing effective action plans, and team building exercises. The leadership and staff held effective discussions on program changes, policy updates, and opportunities to improve program service delivery. The feedback was positive and PEI plans this an annual event if possible.

A PEI hosts a regular all-staff meeting to keep staff well-informed of important issues and what the other teams are working on. PEI rotates which team is in charge of putting the agenda together to better engage staff by sharing the responsibility of meeting coordination which encourages teams to work collaboratively.

### **Strategy 27: APS Welcome Notices**

APS is implementing a program to proactively welcome new employees at all program levels. This effort strives to provide a positive first impression for new staff by establishing a warm work environment from day one. APS expects this to improve and quicken the integration of new staff into the unit by establishing rapport and building trust that leads to increased loyalty and commitment, and

improved retention. APS is coordinating the logistics and process for this activity and expects to implementation by the end of FY 2017.

# STAFF CONCERNS WITH COMPENSATION

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For many years DFPS staff have anecdotally identified salary as an area of significant concern. The evidence of their concerns is corroborated through data from the Survey of Employee Engagement and the State Auditor's Office Exit Survey. In response to staff's concerns the agency continues to examine salary options. DFPS was directed by H.B. 1, Rider 41 of the 84<sup>th</sup> Legislature to evaluate the compensation effectiveness of merit salary increases, paying down overtime hours to 140 and mentoring stipends on improving recruitment and retention rates by region, the results of that study are discussed in this section.

## COMPENSATION STUDY

### **Strategy 28: Conduct Compensation Effectiveness Study**

DFPS collaborated with the University of Houston (UH) on a compensation effectiveness study that measured the financial incentives listed in Rider 41 (e.g., salary increases, paying down of OT hours, and mentoring stipends), but also reviewed financial incentives such as locality pay, college degree pay, career ladders, and merit salary increases.

As part of the study, UH conducted an extensive review of relevant literature to examine effective workforce best practices, including staff development, supervision and staff relations, promotion and value of workforce, staff qualifications, retention strategies, and minimizing caseload and turnover rates.

The Major findings were summarized by UH into ten areas:

1. Pay Discrepancy
2. Retention
3. Transfer Rates

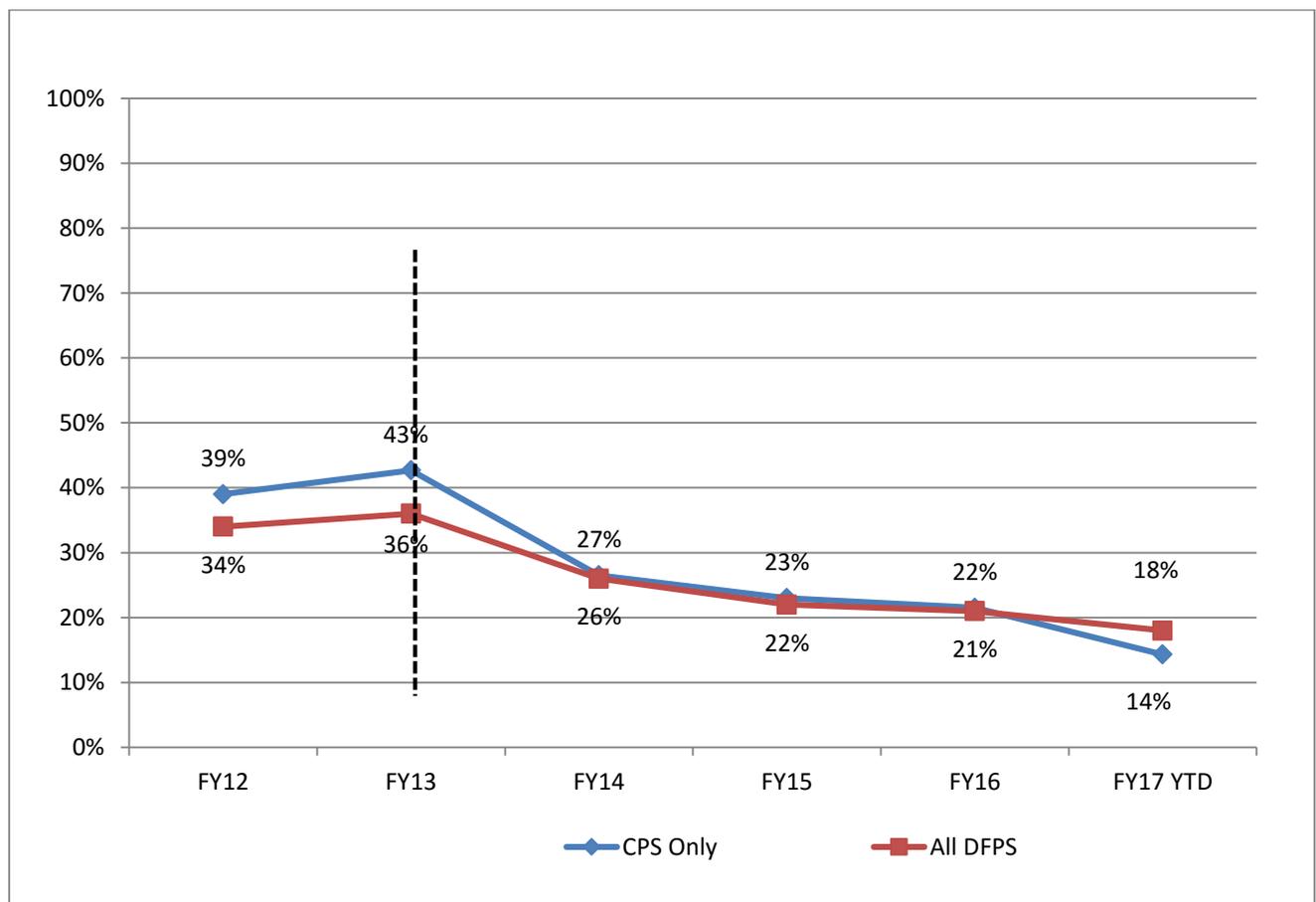
4. Caseload
5. e-Survey Findings from Current Employees
6. Focus Groups Recommendations across Divisions
7. Overall Impact of Incentives on Termination between 2015 and 2016
8. Impact of Incentives on Termination by Region in 2016
9. Impact of Incentives on Transfer by Region in 2016
10. Incentives on Workforce Longevity, 2000-2016

The final report from UH also included 20 recommendations for improvements in retention, incentives, salary and transfer rates, work environment, and additional pilot programs. It is important to note that the number one finding and recommendation of the Compensation Study was that a salary increase would likely have a significant impact on staff retention. CPS staff actually received a salary increase in December of 2016 that was commensurate with this recommendation and therefore the agency has an increased level of confidence that the raises will have a positive impact on retention rates. The DFPS Compensation Assessment and Employee Incentives Review reports from UH are available on the DFPS Public web site under [Agency Wide Reports and Presentations](#).

## LOCALITY PAY

**Strategy 29:** In 2013, energy exploration within Texas increased the cost of living in Region 9. In response to this challenge, the 83rd Legislature, Regular Session, 2013 authorized DFPS, with no funding requested or appropriated, to offer locality pay to employees at \$500. By fiscal year 2014, DFPS funded a \$1,000 locality pay incentive for employees living in Midland, Andrews, Ector and Ward counties and maintained it at \$1,000 in fiscal years 2015, 2016, and 2017. Locality pay effectiveness is one of most quantifiable DFPS financial incentives to date, as depicted in Figure 3 below. Since its inception in fiscal year 2013, CPS turnover experienced a 67 percent decrease and DFPS (all positions) experienced a 50 percent decrease in turnover through fiscal year 2017 YTD.

**FIGURE 3: CHANGES IN TURNOVER OVER TIME WITHIN COUNTIES RECEIVING LOCALITY PAY**



## OTHER INCENTIVE PAY

**Strategy 30:** DFPS recognizes the benefits of other financial incentives authorized for the agency's use to attract and retain staff. The agency offers these additional incentives to qualified staff:

➤ **CPS Investigative Pay**

DFPS is authorized to continue to provide the amount of \$5,000 per fiscal year established by the 79th Legislature (Rider 18) for CPS Investigation caseworkers and supervisors. The pay is provided at the rate of \$416.67 per month, or pro-rata portion if a partial month is worked in the position.

➤ **Mentoring Stipend**

DFPS pays additional compensation through appropriated Rider 35 funds for the mentoring of new employees as a means to increase worker retention. The additional compensation may not exceed \$300 per month to be included in the employee's monthly compensation, proportional to the hours paid during the month.

Other financial incentives are authorized to DFPS, such as college degree pay, on-call pay, high risk pay, and recruitment and retention bonuses. Unfortunately the agency has been unable to obtain sufficient funding to effectively implement or sustain these benefits.

# COMPLETED OBJECTIVES

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DFPS has completed, operationalized, or fully implemented the following agency objectives in FY 2016 or FY2017.

## **Hiring applicants holding less than a four-year degree as CPS caseworkers**

- ✓ CPS maintains a recruiting strategy that authorizes a combination of two years education with two years relevant work experience, or three years education combined with one year of relevant work to meet the four-year degree requirement in the initial selection criteria for entry-level caseworkers. As of May 18, 2017, CPS had hired 198 caseworkers who possessed less than a four-year. Twelve of those hired over the past year had separated, indicating a retention rate of approximately 94 percent.

## **Create an Educational Pathway for non-Title IV-E Employees**

- ✓ DFPS worked to partner with Texas universities to develop an agency-specific degree plan for DFPS employees interested in continuing their education. DFPS implemented a partnership with Texas State University that created a Bachelor of Applied Arts and Science (BAAS) and a Master of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies (MSIS) that are delivered online and offer course credit towards the degree plan for student job, life, and training experiences. Benefits include education designed to meet the needs of agency operations, expedited courses of study to reduce financial burdens for students, and learning delivery methods that meet the needs of DFPS' large mobile workforce.

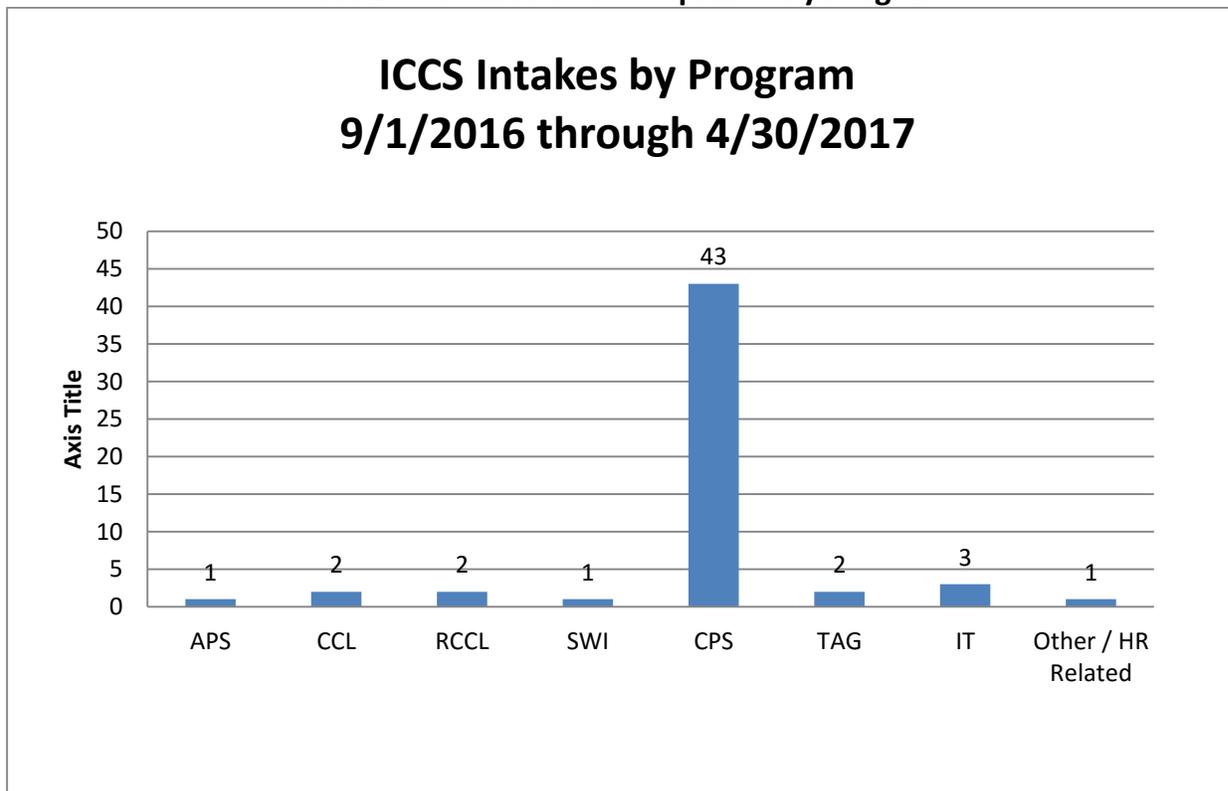
### Consolidate Workforce Management Functions

- ✓ Sunset recommendation 1.1 advised DFPS should consolidate its existing workforce management functions under one operational unit and added additional critical functions to better support employees and systematically identify root causes of turnover. Completed in November 2015.

### Collecting Confidential Internal Complaints

- ✓ Sunset recommendation 1.7 advised DFPS to implement a system for collecting confidential internal complaints from all staff and required that these complaints go to the Workforce management unit established under Sunset Recommendation 1.1 (i.e., Workforce Development Division). Complaints are kept confidential. The system was implemented in April 2016 and recent intake data is provided in Figure 4, below.

**FIGURE 4: Confidential Complaints by Program**



### **Develop Policy on Level Reminders**

- ✓ Within the agency, *Level Reminders* are a documentation process for developing and improving employee job performance or correcting employee work rule violations. Per Sunset recommendation 1.3, DFPS developed an agency-specific policy raising awareness on the proper use of level reminders to increase consistency in the application and monitoring. DFPS collaborated with HHSC HR to refine corrective action policies and training that guides managers on appropriate use of, and reporting responsibilities for positive performance levels. Training was developed and operationalized in January 2016. All agency levels (I-III) are reported to HHSC HR.

### **Awarding Merit Pay**

- ✓ Sunset recommendation 1.6, advised DFPS to develop a policy memo that provided guidance to managers on awarding merit pay to ensure transparency and consistent criteria for merit pay awards. The memo was shared with all DFPS employees, DFPS executive management, and HHSC HR for feedback and approval. The approved policy memo was published in April 2016.

### **Enhance Worker Safety Caution features in IMPACT**

- ✓ Worker safety cautions in IMPACT received enhancements that cause safety hazards (known or suspected) at intake to be highly visible on Intake Reports. These safety hazards generate a yellow caution symbol on staff worklists, prompting better assignment and advance planning for staff safety.

# APPENDICES

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## **APPENDIX A: IMPACT OF ADDITIONAL CPS APPROPRIATIONS**

At the beginning of FY 2017, the agency submitted a Legislative Appropriations Request seeking an increase in the number of CPS workers in the 2018-2019 biennium. The DFPS Commissioner approached the Senate Finance Committee with a request for additional appropriations to provide staff immediate salary increases for certain CPS direct delivery staff and to be authorized to hire a portion of the new CPS workers to address critical staffing needs that he believed necessary to stabilize CPS and ensure the safety of children.

The critical needs funding was ultimately approved and the agency received funding to hire an additional 828 positions. This included 450 CPS caseworker positions, 100 Special Investigator positions and 278 positions ranging from regional unit support to regional management. The proposed timeline to fill these positions was between December and April 2017. By the end of April 2017, DFPS filled 97 percent of the authorized caseworker and Special Investigator positions.

The salary increases, in the amount of \$1,000 per month for caseworkers, became effective in December 2016. Because of State of Texas Human Resources Code rules not all staff were able to receive the raise immediately, but by the end of May 2017 all staff eligible will have received their salary increase. The agency began hiring the new cohort of CPS caseworkers in December 2016 and will have hired all of the positions by the end of May 2017. The caseworker training program takes approximately five months to complete and staff receive their cases slowly over the course of the training program.

Because of the staggered nature of the rollout of the salary increase and the hiring of additional staff, the agency will need more time to determine the impact of these changes on CPS turnover rates. Initial analysis indicates turnover in CPS may be improving and the agency will closely examine the impacts to other agency

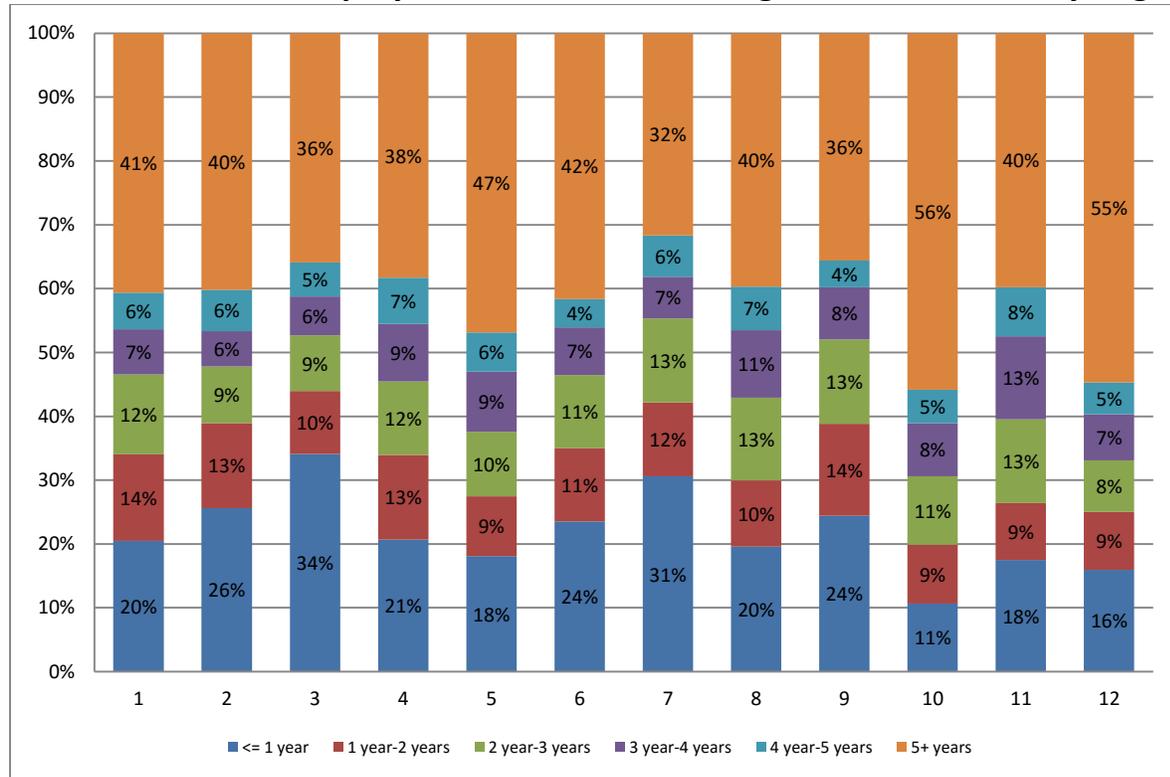
programs. In addition, DFPS leadership has received positive feedback from staff regarding the additional staff resources and the salary increases. The Agency is planning for further detailed analysis of the impact of these initiatives in the coming months which will be discussed in the next Rider 9 update.

## APPENDIX B: RIDER 11 DFPS AND PROGRAM TURNOVER COMPARISON - FY 2014 TO FY 2017

FIGURE 5: RIDER 11 EMPLOYEE TURNOVER COMPARISON REPORT					
Functional Title	Turnover Rate (FY14)	Turnover Rate (FY15)	Turnover Rate (FY16)	Turnover Rate (FY17)	% Change FY16 to FY17
<b>DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES (DFPS)</b>					
All DFPS Employees	19.0%	19.6%	19.3%	18.0%	-6.7%
<b>CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES (CPS)</b>					
CPS Supervisors	6.3%	9.5%	10.4%	10.1%	-3.6%
CPS Program	19.6%	20.5%	20.4%	17.6%	-13.8%
CPS CVS Caseworker	22.6%	22.6%	22.6%	19.0%	-15.9%
CPS FBSS Caseworker	23.0%	27.9%	25.0%	19.5%	-21.8%
CPS INV Caseworker	33.8%	32.7%	32.9%	27.1%	-17.7%
<b>ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES (APS)</b>					
APS Workers	24.6%	23.4%	21.2%	25.7%	21.3%
APS Supervisors	9.1%	13.4%	7.2%	1.8%	-74.9%
APS Program	20.5%	19.8%	18.7%	21.9%	17.1%
<b>CHILD CARE LICENSING (CCL)</b>					
DCL Workers	19.4%	25.1%	20.2%	16.6%	-17.6%
DCL Supervisors	7.2%	7.1%	13.0%	4.4%	-66.1%
DCL Program	16.2%	19.6%	17.3%	15.7%	-9.1%
<b>RESIDENTIAL CHILD CARE LICENSING (RCCL)</b>					
RCCL Workers	20.4%	16.1%	14.1%	21.5%	53.1%
RCCL Supervisors	0.0%	12.9%	6.6%	6.3%	-4.7%
RCCL Program	16.3%	14.2%	11.4%	17.7%	56.1%
<b>STATEWIDE INTAKE (SWI)</b>					
SWI Workers	16.7%	19.1%	19.4%	12.4%	-35.8%
SWI Supervisors	11.3%	8.2%	10.9%	11.3%	3.5%
SWI Program	16.0%	16.1%	16.9%	12.5%	-25.9%

## APPENDIX C: TENURE - FY 2017 YTD

**FIGURE 6: DFPS All Employees FY 2017 YTD Average Percent Tenure by Region**



Tenure grouping is used to monitor the proportion of workers in each region based off being case assignable and is based off the LBB reporting requirements.

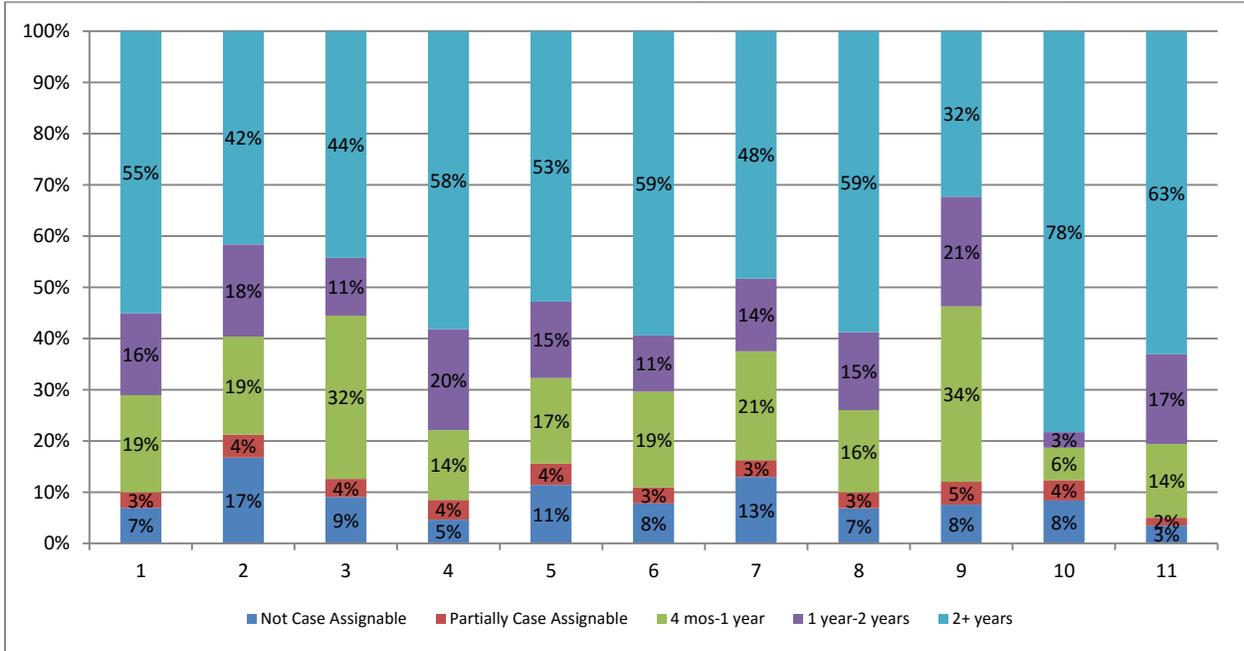
CPS CVS, CPS FBSS, APS, RCCL, DCCL

- Not case assignable is a tenure of less than 105 days
- Partially case assignable is a tenure of 105 days to 135 days
- Fully case assignable is a tenure of more than 135 days
- Tenured refers to caseworkers with 2 or more years of state service.

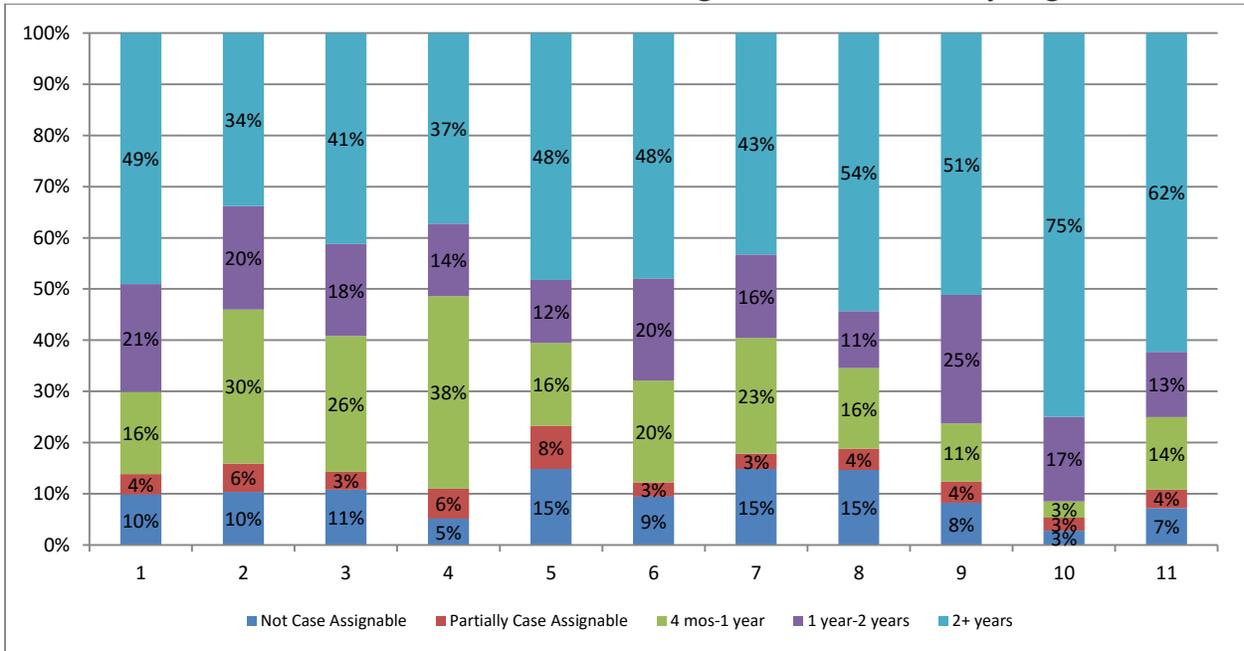
CPS INV

- Not case assignable is a tenure of less than 98 days
- Partially case assignable is a tenure of 98 days to 128 days
- Fully case assignable is a tenure of more than 128 days
- Tenured refers to caseworkers with 2 or more years of state service.

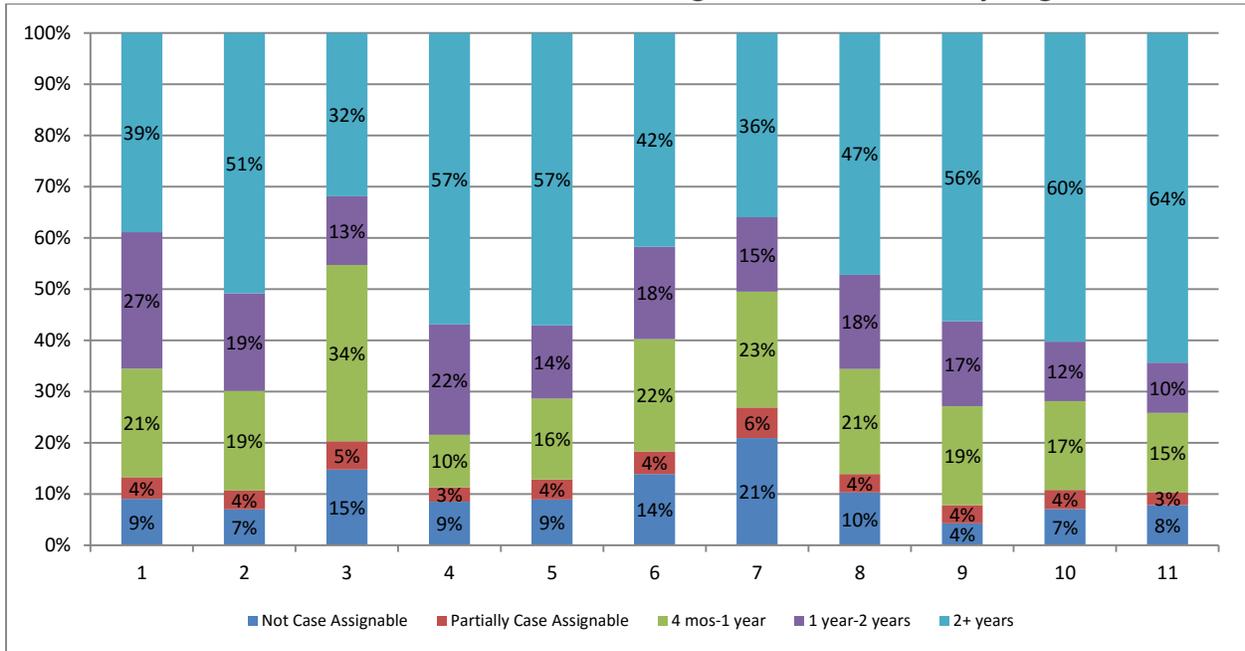
**FIGURE 7: CPS CVS FY 2017 YTD Average Percent Tenure by Region**



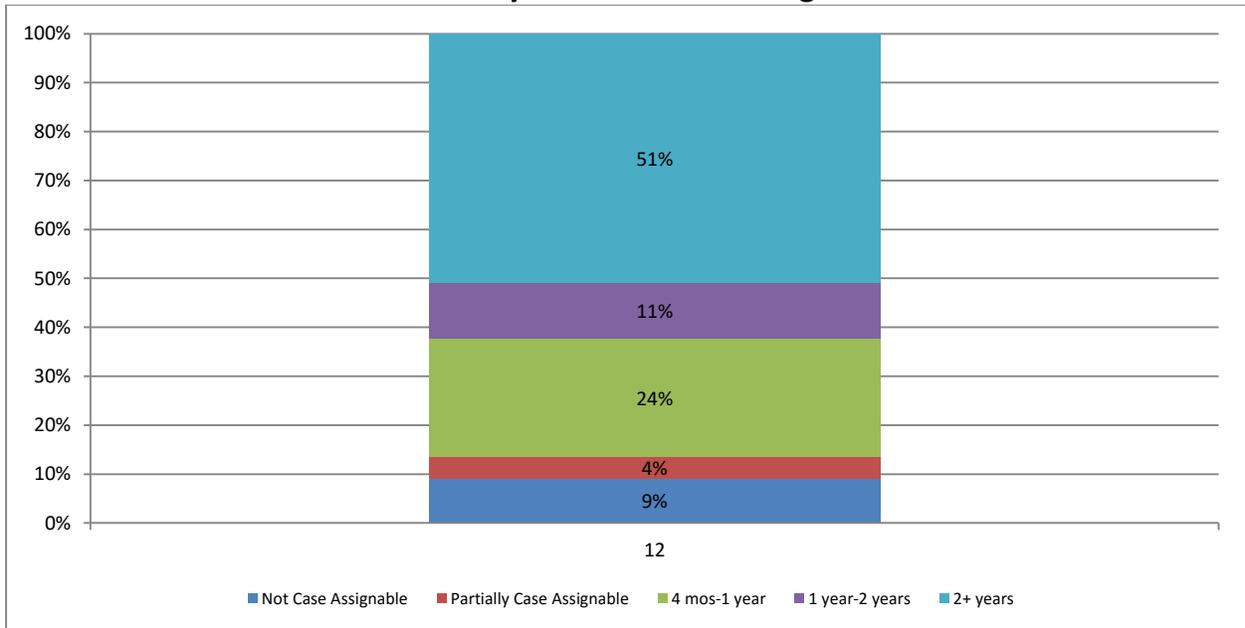
**FIGURE 8: CPS FBSS FY 2017 YTD Average Percent Tenure by Region**



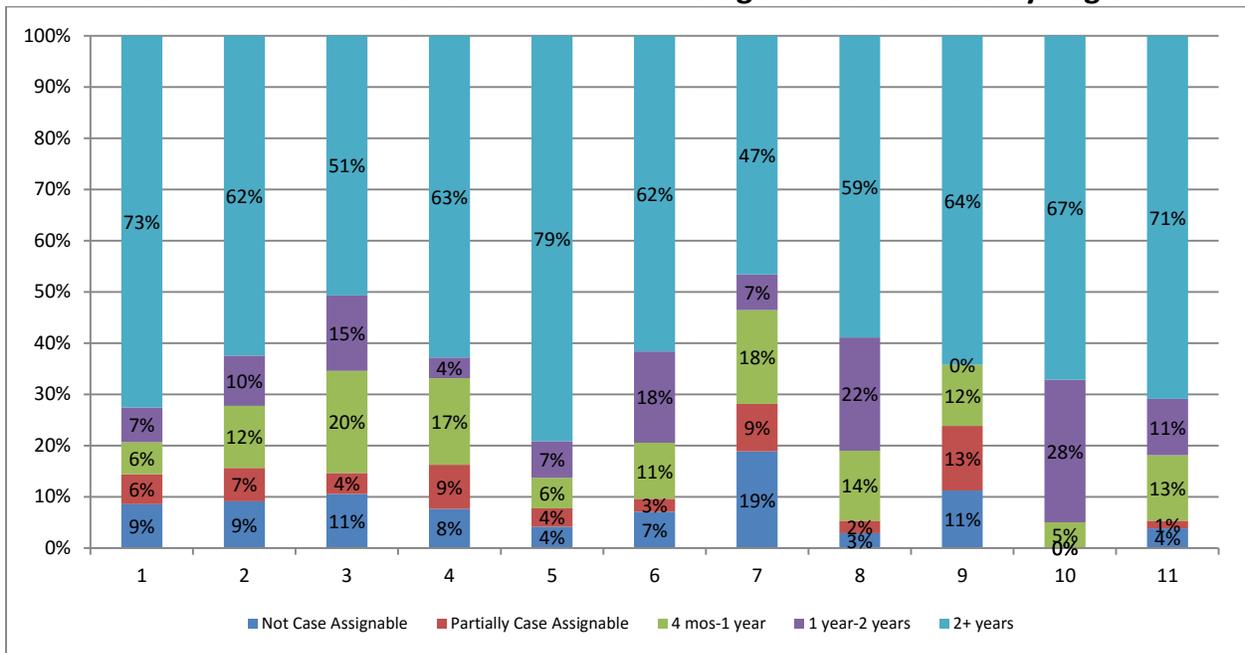
**FIGURE 9: CPS INV FY 2017 YTD Average Percent Tenure by Region**



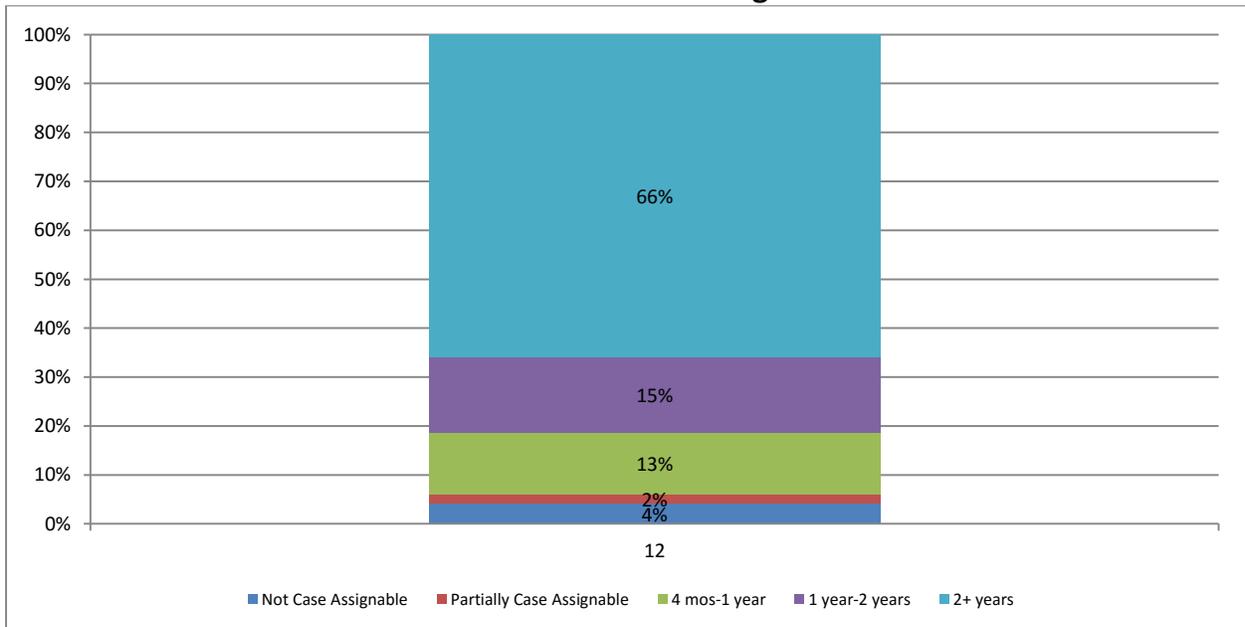
**FIGURE 10: APS Facility FY 2017 YTD Average Percent Tenure**



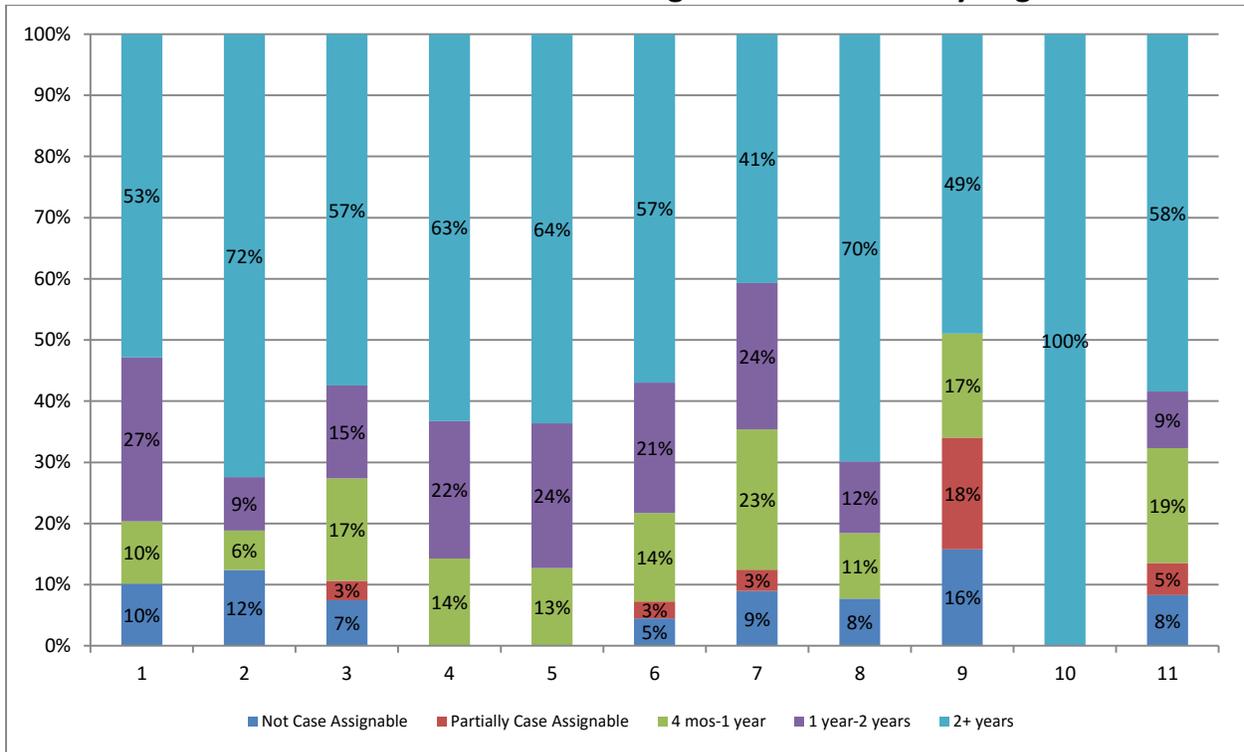
**FIGURE 11: APS In-Home FY 2017 YTD Average Percent Tenure by Region**



**FIGURE 12: RCCL FY 2017 YTD Average Percent Tenure**



**FIGURE 13: CCL FY 2017 YTD Average Percent Tenure by Region**



**FIGURE 14: SWI FY 2017 YTD Average Percent Tenure**

