



**TEXAS**  
Department of Family  
and Protective Services

# **DFPS Rider 21 Report for Community Based Care**

August 2018



# Table of Contents

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Introduction ..... 1

Background..... 1

Evaluation of Community Based Care..... 2

Using the Rider 21 Report to Evaluate Performance ..... 3

SSCC Performance ..... 5

    Our Community Our Kids..... 5



## Introduction

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As required by the General Appropriations Act, 85<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature, DFPS Rider 21, the agency shall, on February 1 and August 1 of each year of the biennium, "Report selected performance measures identified by the Legislative Budget Board (LBB) that will allow for comparative analysis between the legacy foster care and redesigned foster care systems". The report, "shall contain the most recent data for the selected comparative performance measures, an analysis of the data that identifies trends and related impact occurring in the redesigned foster care system, identification and analysis of factors negatively impacting any outcomes, recommendations to address problems identified from the data, and any other information necessary to determine the status of the redesigned foster care system". To meet these requirements DFPS is using a report format specified by the LBB, attached as a spreadsheet. This narrative discusses trends, impact, and analyses.

## Background

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Community Based Care (CBC), formerly known as Foster Care Redesign, changes the way DFPS procures, contracts, and pays for foster care services. Under CBC, a single contractor provides a full continuum of services to children and families within a designated geographic area. In Stage I, this Single Source Continuum Contractor (SSCC) is responsible for finding foster homes or other living arrangements for children in state care and providing them with services to meet identified needs. In Stage II, the SSCC expands services to include relative or "kinship" placements, and the SSCC has sole responsibility for case management. The model requires competitive procurement of performance-based SSCC contracts with financial incentives and disincentives for permanency outcomes and additional performance measures for child safety and well-being.

DFPS executed an SSCC contract with ACH Child and Family Services (ACH) on January 1, 2014 for DFPS Region 3b. This SSCC catchment area includes Tarrant, Erath, Hood, Johnson, Palo Pinto, Parker, and Somervell counties in DFPS Region 3. Our Community Our Kids (OCOK), the Region 3b SSCC operating under ACH accepted its first referral for new and subsequent placements on September 1, 2014. On April 1, 2015, DFPS and the SSCC completed the transition of the legacy children in Region 3b. As of July 7, 2018, OCOK had 1,301 children in the SSCC continuum which represents 98 percent of the children/youth in paid foster care from Region 3b and approximately seven percent in paid foster care in Texas.<sup>1</sup>

DFPS has legislative approval to expand the current contract with the Region 3b SSCC from Foster Care Redesign to CBC services. In addition, the 85<sup>th</sup> legislature supported implementation of CBC in four additional catchment areas:

- DFPS released a Request for Application for CBC in Region 2 on October 18, 2017 DFPS awarded a contract on May 29, 2018 to 2INgage, a new partnership between Texas Family Initiative LLC and New Horizons Ranch and Center Inc. to serve as the Single Source Continuum Contractor (SSCC) for the Region 2 area.
- DFPS released a Request for Application for CBC in Bexar County on December 5, 2017 and anticipates contract award in August 2018.
- DFPS will announce two new catchment areas and release procurements in these areas in the fall of 2018.

DFPS defined 17 total catchment areas for CBC in Texas. DFPS is considering the following criteria in selecting the next catchment areas for implementation:

- Minimum of 500 new entries of children per year
- Proximity to existing SSCC catchment area
- Local community support
- Regional readiness and stability
- Foster care capacity needs
- Foster care placements historically provided for children from the catchment and for children from other areas of the state

Additional factors may be added as DFPS continues to develop the model for CBC.

## **Evaluation of Community Based Care**

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Evaluation of Community Based Care is on-going to support Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) and includes both process and outcome components. DFPS and the Public Provider Partnership (PPP), which continues as the guiding body for Community Based Care, define the key elements to be evaluated (guiding principles and logic model). Process and outcome evaluation findings help determine whether these elements are being implemented with fidelity to the model and are yielding the desired outcomes. DFPS uses findings to assist in assessing performance, trends, design changes, and any problems or issues in the CBC catchment areas.

As required by the General Appropriations Act, 85<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature, DFPS Rider 21 requires the use of an independent evaluator to complete a process evaluation of the rollout and implementation of Community Based Care in each established catchment area. The process evaluation will help DFPS address initial operations, implementation and service delivery issues, and make adjustments prior to successive roll out of Community Based Care in new geographic areas. DFPS is contracting for an independent entity to conduct the evaluation beginning September 1, 2018.

Outcome evaluation includes measuring both contract performance and system change. In addition to the performance measures in this Rider report, DFPS continues to work with Chapin

Hall of the University of Chicago to provide independent data analysis of each SSCC's performance on paid care days which will become the basis for incentive payments once the SSCC assumes responsibility for permanency outcomes. Chapin Hall will help DFPS test the logic model for Community Based Care which continues to be based on the hypothesis that placing children in their home communities, in the least restrictive settings possible, and now transferring all case management services to contractors under a performance-based contract, will yield improved permanency outcomes.

The results of these independent evaluation efforts will be reported separately from the Rider 21 report but are an important part of meeting the requirement to assess the redesigned system, including identification of and recommendations for addressing problems, and may be referenced in future reports.

## Using the Rider 21 Report to Evaluate Performance

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The CBC model is evaluated by comparing performance outcomes for the state as a whole, performance data for non-CBC catchments, and performance for individual SSCCs over time. To this end, the Rider 21 report Appendix B includes data for populations defined as follows<sup>ii</sup>:

- **Statewide Population** - The statewide population is the performance of the entire state with regard to the SSCC and "SSCC-eligible" legacy placements. "SSCC eligible" placements are contracted foster care placements that would be within the scope of an SSCC contract to provide.
- **Statewide Non-CBC Population** - The statewide "non-CBC" population aggregates data for children in "SSCC-eligible" placements in catchment areas where DFPS has not implemented CBC.
- **Region 3b Legacy Population** - The Region 3b legacy population shows the historical performance for the 3b catchment counties: Tarrant, Erath, Somervell, Hood, Palo Pinto, Johnson and Parker. In fiscal year 2015, the number of children in the 3b legacy population decreases as all but a few children transition to the 3b SSCC population. This number decreases over time as children exit care. As of December 2, 2017, there were 29 children from 3b who remained in the legacy system. The small number of children in the numerator and denominator impacts the resulting percentages, as seen in the Section B Appendix, and cannot be compared to the historical baseline percentages which were calculated for all children served in these counties.
- **SSCC Only Population** - The performance of each SSCC is reported individually. Currently the only contracted SSCC serving clients is in Region 3b. The Region 3b SSCC population includes both children who transferred to the SSCC in fiscal year 2015 and

children newly entering care each fiscal year. Future reports will show legacy catchment and SSCC performance for Region 2 and Bexar County.

As Community Based Care progresses through a staged, statewide implementation, the data can be used to answer the following questions:

1. **Are there statewide trends affecting SSCC performance?** Compare state performance trends to SSCC catchment trends and to trends for legacy (non-CBC) catchments. Similarities may point to statewide factors influencing performance in CBC catchments.
2. **Is the redesigned system doing better than the legacy system?** Compare SSCC performance (currently there is only one SSCC in Region 3b in Texas which limits comparability with regard to smaller total counts) to the performance of the legacy non-CBC population. If the SSCC catchment areas are improving over their historic baseline more than the legacy catchment areas are improving over theirs, the changes made to the foster care system under CBC are effective.
3. **Is a particular SSCC improving performance over time?** Compare individual SSCC performance across fiscal years. Improvement may take time as DFPS transitions services to each SSCC and the SSCC works to build the network of services in the area.
4. **Are some SSCCs performing better than others?** Compare SSCC performance one to another. If improvements to outcomes compared to historical performance are greater for a specific SSCC, the specific strategies implemented by the SSCC may be more effective.

Outcome measurement requires time. Chapin Hall data and performance experts define “sufficient” time as a minimum of two years of full implementation with additional time required to collect data on those children and families’ experience and outcomes from entry to exit. Full implementation means implementation of CBC where the SSCC serves the families of children in their care and provides case management services and kinship services. No SSCC has reached full implementation. Further, major systemic changes may not be observable until more catchment areas become a part of the redesigned system and fully implement CBC.

DFPS continues to refine performance measures methodologies to support the best measurement of outcomes and calculation of baseline targets. Two important indicator changes were made in fiscal year 2018:

1. The indicator for the outcome “children/youth are placed in the least restrictive placement setting” was changed from a point in time count of children in family foster homes to the total percent of care days during the fiscal year spent in family foster homes. Family foster homes include non-relative and relative verified foster homes. This outcome better reflects children’s experience in paid foster care.
2. The indicator for “children/youth have stability in foster care” was changed from the percent of children with two or fewer foster care placements over two fiscal years to the

rate of foster care placements per child during a single fiscal year. The new calculation better reflects the experience of children with only one placement as well as efforts to stabilize placement for a child who already has many placements, given that all placements are counted.

## SSCC Performance

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The primary goal of Community-Based Care in Stage I is to build residential child care capacity to meet local needs. Although sufficient outcome data is not expected until an SSCC has fully implemented all stages of the model, performance outcomes are tracked specific to the population of children served in Stage I, which is children in contracted foster care placements.

DFPS uses a continuous quality improvement approach that includes formal processes for addressing performance issues. DFPS requires performance improvement plans when trends show performance below the catchment historical baseline or decreased performance over time. Quality improvement plans require additional data and information to better understand factors driving performance and develop action steps to address issues and concerns.

## Our Community Our Kids

Our Community Our Kids is the single contracted SSCC serving children at this time. Outcome performance for fiscal year 2018, quarter three, for the Region 3b SSCC represents year to date performance: (See Section B of Attachment to Report)

- **Children/youth are safe from abuse and neglect** - 99.7% of children from Region 3b were safe in their foster care placements. This is consistent with child safety statewide.
- **Children/youth have stability in their placements** - This measure is cumulative as it captures all placements made during the fiscal year and will increase over the course of the fiscal year. Performance as of the third quarter was 1.38 placements per child. State and non-CBC performance was 1.36 placements per child.
- **Children/youth are placed in the least restrictive environment** – Performance remained steady at 78% of all contracted foster care placement days spent in a foster family or kinship foster home. The “non-CBC” populations declined from 79% in the first quarter to 76% as of the third quarter.
- **Children/youth are placed in their home communities** - Proximity is measured by the percent of placements within 50 miles of home (address at removal) on the last day of a performance period. Data for this measure is produced every six months by Chapin Hall. Performance remained steady with 72% of children in foster care from Region 3b placed within 50 miles at the end of the second quarter. Statewide non-CBC performance also remained steady at 62%.
- **Children/youth are placed with siblings** - OCOK performance declined with 61% of sibling groups placed together on the last day of the third quarter compared to 64% in

quarter one. Statewide non-CBC performance increased from 62% of sibling groups placed together on the last day of the first quarter to 65% at the close of the third quarter.

- **Children/youth are prepared for successful adulthood** – 84% of youth in an SSCC foster care placements turning 18 completed PAL Life Skills Training. Statewide “non-CBC” PAL completion was 93%. Performance for both populations remained steady since the first quarter.

DFPS has taken contract action with OCOK to initiate quality improvement plans related to the outcomes for placement of sibling groups together in care, placement within 50 miles, and placement stability.

- While placement of siblings together saw improvement in fiscal years 2016 and 2017, it has declined through the third quarter of fiscal year 2018. Note that this measure is a point in time measure. DFPS further recognizes that, compared to Region 3b baseline, the SSCC is working not only to place siblings together, but to place them together within their own community. OCOK quality improvement plans have largely focused on developing new capacity. OCOK will be making a change in their placement decision system algorithms that will prioritize homes with one opening over homes with more than one opening, in order to reserve that capacity for sibling groups, when making single child placements. OCOK is also initiating an effort to more actively work with foster parents to step children in residential treatment down into therapeutic foster homes with their siblings.
- Despite the increase in therapeutic foster care capacity, Region 3b does not have enough local capacity to meet the demand for therapeutic level placements, including residential treatment capacity. Since the contract began in fiscal year 2015, around 87% of foster home placements have been made within 50 miles. In contrast, the percentage of placements close to home for children in other settings, including residential treatment, was 26% in fiscal year 2017. OCOK quality improvement plans include a long-term effort to increase therapeutic foster home capacity to both step down and divert placements in residential treatment facilities. OCOK has contracted a professional home-based foster care program that is in the start-up phase. OCOK is also opening a second residential treatment program for a total of 32 Residential Treatment Center beds available by the second quarter of fiscal year 2019.
- The OCOK model includes disruption mitigation practices and performance oversight rewarding stability that has increased stability in foster homes. The overall increase in placements (instability) is influenced in part by children who move from one residential treatment program to another or to emergency shelters. Efforts to increase therapeutic capacity, maintain children in least restrictive settings, and more effectively step children down from treatment programs should positively impact stability performance. OCOK has recently decreased emergency shelter placements which leads to fewer overall placements. Stability improved

from 1.55 placements per child in fiscal year 2016 to 1.50 placements in fiscal year 2017 and may continue to show improvement in fiscal year 2018.

OCOK has submitted their strategies for improving performance in the above-mentioned areas. DFPS has reviewed and accepted the quality improvement plans and anticipates an improvement in performance as a result of these strategies.

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<sup>i</sup> DFPS CBC Data Warehouse Report wk\_sa\_82s2lxas, Children in All Living Arrangements, July 7, 2018; Agency Data Warehouse - Substitute Care Data Mart, Report Number: fps\_sa\_19s, as of July 7, 2018.

<sup>ii</sup> The populations described are not relevant to Section A, which reports the agency's current LBB performance measures. In Section A, the statewide and non-CBC populations are not limited to children in contracted foster care ("SSCC-eligible"), but include all children in substitute care. The SSCC 3b and Legacy 3b populations are children in contracted foster care and children not in contracted foster care at the time the measurement is taken, respectively. As a result, the legacy population includes children previously in contracted foster care with the SSCC, placed with a relative, returned home or in another unpaid foster care placement at the time the measurement is taken. The 3b-All population is therefore included for an "apples to apples" comparison to the statewide performance populations. The full population may be considered to determine the impact of CBC in Stage I on long term outcomes, while recognizing that the Department has case management to influence permanency outcomes, and not all children in substitute care enter or remain in contracted foster care.