

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF FINAL BILL ANALYSIS

BILL #: CS/CS/HB 7063 PCB CFS 20-02 Child Welfare
SPONSOR(S): Health & Human Services Committee and Ways & Means Committee and Children, Families & Seniors Subcommittee, Ponder and others
TIED BILLS: **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:**

FINAL HOUSE FLOOR ACTION: 117 Y's 0 N's **GOVERNOR'S ACTION:** Approved

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CS/CS/HB 7063 passed the House on March 11, 2020, as CS/SB 1326.

The bill makes numerous reforms to the state child welfare system administered by the Department of Children and Families (DCF). DCF is responsible for the overall performance of the child welfare system, but contracts with community-based organizations (CBCs), sheriffs, state attorneys, and other providers to perform various aspects. According to DCF it has little ability to ensure high performance by some of its partners in the system of care, leading to uneven, sometimes poor, outcomes. In addition, the high-stress nature of child welfare work and lack of consistent occupational support leads to very high worker turnover and poor outcomes.

The bill creates a new accountability system to ensure DCF and its providers meet high levels of performance. The bill establishes the DCF Office of Quality to identify performance standards and provide assistance to address identified performance deficiencies. The bill also requires DCF to ensure CBCs deliver services in accordance with established performance standards, and specifies tiered interventions DCF may use if CBCs fail to comply with contracted terms or if performance is deficient. Further, the bill requires DCF to grade the overall health of the child welfare system and measure performance of CPIs, CBCs, and children's legal services. In addition, the bill creates a pilot project to establish performance standards to assess outcomes for children served in the 6th and 13th judicial circuits. The bill authorizes project and performance incentive funding, subject to appropriations.

Currently, DCF conducts a child protective investigation if a hotline report meets the statutory definition of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect. DCF conduct investigations in 60 counties; sheriffs' offices do so in seven. The bill directs sheriffs and contracted attorneys to collaborate with DCF on federal and state quality assurance and quality improvement initiatives. The bill requires all sheriffs that provide child protective services to operate in accord with the same federal performance standards imposed on DCF staff. Additionally, it requires certain sheriffs, and contracted attorneys, to adopt DCF's child welfare practice model and operate in accord with the same standards as DCF staff. The bill requires DCF to conduct an annual evaluation of the performance of all sheriffs and contracted attorneys. For certain sheriffs, the evaluation will be based on the same performance standards that are not specific to or based on those performance standards imposed on DCF staff unrelated to the child welfare practice model.

The Florida Institute for Child Welfare (FICW) at the Florida State University College of Social Work researches child welfare initiatives contributing to a more effective child welfare system. The bill expands the functions of FICW to develop professional supports for child welfare workers. It requires FICW to inform, train, and engage social work students for a successful career in child welfare. The FICW and the FSU College of Social Work will redesign the social work curriculum to include opportunities for students to learn from real-world child welfare cases. Similarly, it requires FICW to design and implement a career-long professional development curriculum for child welfare professionals at all levels and from all disciplines. The bill also directs DCF, in collaboration with FICW, to develop an expanded career ladder for CPIs and implement programs to prevent and mitigate secondary traumatic stress and burnout among CPIs.

The bill requires local community alliances to include an individual representing faith-based organizations and to work with these organizations to encourage their involvement in the community system of care. It also directs CBCs to have a liaison to community- and faith-based organizations and have a process for ensuring CBCs are aware of the services offered by these organizations.

The bill has a significant, negative impact on DCF, and no fiscal impact on local governments. See Fiscal Analysis section.

The bill was approved by the Governor on June 30, 2020, ch. 2020-152, L.O.F., and will become effective on July 1, 2020.

This document does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill sponsor or House of Representatives.

STORAGE NAME: h7063z1.CFS.DOCX

DATE: 7/6/2020

I. SUBSTANTIVE INFORMATION

A. EFFECT OF CHANGES:

Background

Department of Children and Families

The mission of the Department of Children and Families (DCF) is to work in partnership with local communities to protect the vulnerable, promote strong and economically self-sufficient families, and advance personal and family recovery and resiliency.¹ DCF must develop a strategic plan to fulfil its mission and establish measureable goals, objectives, performance standards, and quality assurance requirements to ensure DCF is accountable to taxpayers.²

Under s. 20.19(4), F.S., DCF is required to provide services relating to:

- Adult protection.
- Child care regulation.
- Child welfare.
- Domestic violence.
- Economic self-sufficiency.
- Homelessness.
- Mental health.
- Refugees.
- Substance abuse.

DCF must develop a strategic plan for fulfilling its mission and establish a set of measurable goals, objectives, performance standards, and quality assurance requirements to ensure it is accountable. DCF must also deliver services by contract through private providers to the extent allowed by law and funding.³ These private providers include managing entities delivering behavioral health services and community-based care lead agencies (CBCs) delivering child-welfare services.

The total agency budget is \$3.2 billion.

Florida's Child Welfare System

Chapter 39, F.S., creates the dependency system charged with protecting child welfare. Florida's child welfare system identifies children and families in need of services through reports to the central abuse hotline (hotline) and child protective investigations. The Department of Children and Families (DCF) and CBCs work with those families to address the problems endangering children, if possible. If the problems cannot be addressed, the child welfare system finds safe out-of-home placements for these children.

DCF's practice model is based on the safety of the child within the home by using in-home services, such as parenting coaching and counseling, to maintain and strengthen that child's natural supports in his or her environment.

¹ S. 20.19(1), F.S.

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

DCF remains responsible for a number of child welfare functions, including operating the hotline, performing child protective investigations, and providing children’s legal services.⁴ Ultimately, DCF is responsible for program oversight and the overall performance of the child welfare system.⁵

Community-Based Care Organizations

Community-Based Care combines the outsourcing of foster care and related services to agencies with an increased local community ownership of service delivery and design.⁶ CBCs are responsible for providing foster care and related services. These services include, but are not limited to, counseling, domestic violence services, substance abuse services, family preservation, emergency shelter, and adoption.⁷ The CBC must give priority to services that are evidence-based and trauma informed.⁸ CBCs contract with a number of subcontractors for case management and direct care services to children and their families. The CBCs plan, administer, and coordinate the delivery of client services; ensure compliance with federal and state laws, rules, and regulations; and monitor subcontractors.⁹ There are 17 CBCs statewide, which serve the state’s 20 judicial circuits.¹⁰

Funding

Federal grants to DCF fund portions of the contracted services by CBCs, including foster care, adoption assistance, and independent living programs.¹¹ DCF must provide funding to the CBCs based on an equity allocation model. The model is designed to allocate funds among the CBCs based on the particular population served by each organization. The model includes “core services funding,” which is defined as all funds allocated to the CBCs operating under contract with DCF under s. 409.987, F.S., with exceptions including:

- Funds appropriated for independent living;
- Funds appropriated for maintenance adoption subsidies;
- Funds allocated by the DCF for protective investigations training;
- Nonrecurring funds;
- Designated mental health wrap-around services funds; and
- Funds for special projects for a designated CBC.¹²

The following table includes the amount each CBC received for FY 2019-20 and the total amount paid, to date, to each CBC.

⁴ OPPAGA, report 06-50.

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ Florida Department of Children and Families, *Community Based Care*, <https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/community-based-care/> (last visited Feb. 19, 2020).

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ S. 409.988(3), F.S.

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ Florida Department of Children and Families, *Community Based Care Lead Agency Map*, <http://www.myflfamilies.com/serviceprograms/community-based-care/cbc-map> (last visited Feb. 20, 2020).

¹¹ Child Welfare Federal and State Funding Eligibility, CF Operating Procedure No. 170-15 (Dec . 2019), <https://www.myflfamilies.com/admin/publications/cfops/CFOP%20170-xx%20Child%20Welfare/CFOP%20170-15%20%20Federal%20and%20State%20Funding%20Eligibility/CFOP%20170-15.%20%20%20%20Federal%20and%20State%20Funding%20Eligibility.pdf>

¹² S. 409.991(1)(a), F.S.

CBC Lead Agency	Circuit	Contract Amount for FY 2019-20	Total Payment to Date
Lakeview Center	1	\$53,417,374.00	\$258,731,376.01
Big Bend	2, 14	\$38,660,324.00	\$498,861,998.66
Partnership for Strong Families	3, 8	\$37,399,596.00	\$353,336,137.18
Family Support Services of N FL	4	\$59,396,213.00	\$685,936,262.43
Kids First of FL	4	\$53,249,984.00	\$90,314,408.42
Community Partnership for Children	7	\$40,164,083.00	\$486,072,332.79
Safe Children Coalition	12	\$34,411,445.00	\$434,804,777.12
Eckerd Community Alternatives	6, 13	\$120,762,463.00	\$1,063,276,255.19
Children's Network of SW FL	20	\$48,199,553.00	\$529,029,621.00
Kids Central	5	\$53,170,881.00	\$692,926,422.84
CBC of Central FL (Embrace Families)	9, 18	\$74,726,571.00	\$816,229,250.47
Heartland for Children	10	\$45,932,793.00	\$459,576,383.45
CBC of Brevard	18	\$26,579,430.00	\$300,463,313.39
Communities Connected for Kids	19	\$32,164,440.00	\$350,185,344.20
ChildNet	15, 17	\$129,051,753.00	\$478,776,691.37
Citrus Family Care Network	11, 16	\$107,836,336.00	\$108,630,442.96

Eckerd Community Alternatives

Eckerd Community Alternatives (Eckerd) has served as the CBC in Hillsborough, Pasco, and Pinellas counties since 2012. It operates through two subsidiaries, one serving Pasco and Pinellas, and the other serving Hillsborough.¹³ Both Eckerd subsidiaries have struggled in providing services, with performance on many metrics falling below statewide averages. For example, both subsidiaries have consistently underperformed on the rate of abuse per 100,000 days in foster care, the percentage of children who do not re-enter care within one year of moving to a permanent home, and placement moves per 1,000 days in foster care.¹⁴

This situation manifested in Hillsborough County with the system of care failing to provide stable placements for many children in 2018, including an identified group of 30-35 children who had gone for extended periods with no stable placement.¹⁵ In some instances, children slept in agency offices because no placement was available.¹⁶ Some children have had more than 50 different placements, and have moved from place to place each night, often being uncertain where they will spend the night until late afternoon or early evening.¹⁷

Contributing factors may include high removal rates for children and funding availability. In FY 2017-2018, removal rates were 8.57 for Hillsborough and 6.56 for Pasco and Pinellas per 100 alleged victims, compared to the state average of 5.45 per 100 alleged victims.¹⁸ As children are removed, the CBC must assign case managers and provide services. Eckerd Hillsborough experienced a 23 percent

¹³ Florida Department of Children and Families, *A Comprehensive, Multi-Year Review of the Revenues, Expenditures, and Financial Position of All Community-Based Care Lead Agencies with System of Care Analysis*, <https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/child-welfare/docs/2019LMRs/Comprehensive%20Review%20of%20Revenues%20Expenditures.pdf>; See also Eckerd Connects, *FAQ*, <https://eckerd.org/about-us/faq/> (last visited Feb. 28, 2020).

¹⁴ *Hillsborough County System of Care Peer Review Report*, https://media.wfla.com/nxs-wflatv-media-us-east-1/document_dev/2018/06/12/Hillsborough%20Peer%20Review%20Report%20Final_1528842667222_45268998_ver1.0.pdf (last visited Feb. 28, 2020).

¹⁵ *Id.*

¹⁶ *Id.*; See also Gina Jordan, *Florida Foster Youth Often Refuse Placement After Being Moved Dozens of Times*, WUSF (Jan. 29, 2020), <https://wusfnews.wusf.usf.edu/post/report-florida-foster-youth-often-refuse-placement-after-being-moved-dozens-times> (last visited Apr. 1, 2020).

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ *Supra* note 14.

increase in the number of children entering out-of-home care in FY 2016, with an increase of 344 more children receiving services.¹⁹ Eckerd Pinellas/Pasco experienced a 10 percent increase in the number of children entering out-of-home care between FY 2016-2017, resulting in an increase of 252 more children receiving services.²⁰ While removal rates have been decreasing since FY 2017-2018, as of November 2019, exits from out-of-home care have continued to be about 200 less than the number of entries, which contributes to the overall increase in children served and length of stay.²¹

In 2018, DCF Secretary Mike Carroll charged the Hillsborough County Peer Review Team and the CBC monitoring team to determine the causes behind the shortage of placement for teens in Hillsborough County.²² The teams reviewed data from DCF's child welfare results-oriented accountability reports, among others.²³

The team concluded, "the Hillsborough County child welfare system of care lacks a clear vision, effective leadership, true collaboration and mutual accountability."²⁴ Additionally, the team found that investigations "are not thoroughly identifying, engaging and vetting relative/nonrelative placements prior to removal."²⁵ Further, it found that "the foster parent licensing and support process is overly complex, fragmented and inefficient, and not trauma informed" and "the number of children who remain under the supervision of the Court beyond nine months post-reunification is excessive."²⁶

Additionally, Eckerd provided case management and other services to the family of Jordan Belliveau, a child in Pinellas County who was allegedly killed by his mother in 2018. Jordan was a toddler under court supervision due to a child protective investigation that found him to be living in an unsafe home environment. Jordan was reunified with his mother after being in foster care for over a year.²⁷ Jordan's mother later reported him missing and he was subsequently found dead, and his mother has been charged with his murder.²⁸ Jordan's mother has entered a plea of not guilty, and her trial is set for August 10, 2020.

Overall Performance of the Child Welfare System of Care

DCF, CBCs, and subcontractors share the responsibility for achieving child welfare outcome goals specified in s. 409.986(2), F.S.²⁹ These goals include:

- Children are first and foremost protected from abuse and neglect.
- Children are safely maintained in their homes, if possible and appropriate.
- Services are provided to protect children and prevent their removal from their home.
- Children have permanency and stability in their living arrangements.
- Family relationships and connections are preserved for children.
- Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.
- Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.
- Children receive services to meet their physical and mental health needs.
- Children develop the capacity for independent living and competence as an adult.

¹⁹ The Center for Child Welfare, *Risk Pool Peer Review Committee Report Eckerd Community Alternatives- Circuit 6* (Nov. 2019), http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/Publications/riskpool/ECA-H_RiskPoolReportFY19-20.pdf

²⁰ The Center for Child Welfare, *Risk Pool Peer Review Committee Report Eckerd Community Alternatives- Circuit 13* (Nov. 2019), http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/Publications/riskpool/ECA-PP_RiskPoolReportFY19-20.pdf

²¹ *Id.*

²² See Mark Douglas, *DCF Experts Arrive Monday to Review Foster Care Failures in Hillsborough*, WFLA News Channel 8 (Mar. 2, 2018), <https://www.wfla.com/8-on-your-side/investigations/dcf-experts-arrive-monday-to-review-foster-care-failures-in-hillsborough-exposed-by-8-on-your-side/>

²³ *Id.*

²⁴ *Id.*

²⁵ *Id.*

²⁶ *Id.*

²⁷ *Id.*

²⁸ Mary Stringini, *Failed by the System*, ABC Action News Tampa Bay (Sep. 5, 2018) <https://www.abcactionnews.com/news/region-north-pinellas/largo-failed-by-the-system-foster-parents-devastated-after-2-year-old-killed-by-biological-mother>

²⁹ S. 409.997(1), F.S.

Results-Oriented Accountability

The Results-Oriented Accountability Program (ROAP) is a framework for measuring the success of efforts to improve child welfare outcomes, while attempting to create a culture of transparency and accountability.³⁰ The purpose of ROAP is to monitor and measure the use of resources, the quality and amount of services provided, and child and family outcomes.³¹ The program includes data analysis, research review, and evaluation.³² The information compiled in ROAP must at least incorporate:

- Valid and reliable outcome measures for each of the goals specified;
- Regular and periodic monitoring activities that track the identified outcome measures on a statewide, regional, and provider-specific basis;
- An analytical framework that builds on the results of the outcomes monitoring procedures and assesses the statistical validity of observed associations between child welfare interventions and the measured outcomes;
- A program of research review to identify interventions that are supported by evidence as causally linked to improved outcomes;
- An ongoing process of evaluation to determine the efficacy and effectiveness of various interventions;
- Procedures for making the results of the accountability program transparent for all parties involved in the child welfare system as well as policymakers and the public, which shall be updated at least quarterly and published on the department's website in a manner that allows custom searches of the performance data; and
- An annual performance report that is provided to interested parties including the dependency judge or judges in the community-based care service area.³³

DCF provides information about child welfare performance through its monthly Child Welfare Key Indicators report. The January 2020 report provided information on 86 measures regarding the hotline, investigations, eligibility, CBC, and system of care performance.³⁴ Additionally, DCF maintains a dashboard accessed through its website which offers users the opportunity for tailored queries of many of these and additional metrics.³⁵

Federal Measures

Federal and state measures assess Florida's child welfare system. The federal Department of Health and Human Services assesses the performance of a state's child welfare system on seven key measures of safety and permanency. The following table includes these measures, Florida's statewide performance and the federal target during the second quarter of FY 2019-20. Florida exceeded the federal target on four of the seven measures.³⁶

³⁰ Florida Department of Children and Families, *Results-Oriented Accountability Program Plan*, <https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/child-welfare/docs/2015LMRs/Results-Oriented%20Accountability%20Plan.pdf> (last visited Feb. 27, 2020).

³¹ S. 409.997(2), F.S.

³² *Id.*

³³ *Id.*

³⁴ Florida Department of Children and Families, Child Welfare Key Indicators Report, <http://www.centerforchildwelfare.org/ChildWelfareKeyIndicators.shtml> (last visited Feb. 28, 2020).

³⁵ Florida Department of Children and Families, Florida's Child Welfare Statistics, <https://www.myflfamilies.com/programs/childwelfare/dashboard/> (last visited Feb. 28, 2020).

³⁶ Florida Department of Children and Families, Office of Child Welfare, *Federal Indicators*, <https://www.myflfamilies.com/programs/childwelfare/dashboard/overview.shtml?Select%20Measures%20to%20Display=Federal%20Measures> (last visited Jan. 26, 2020).

Federal Measure	Statewide Performance ³⁷	Federal Target
Rate of abuse/neglect per 100,000 days in foster care	7.59 days	8.50 or lower
Percent no recurrence of maltreatment within 12 months	92.97%	90.90 or higher
Percent exiting to a permanent home within 12 months of entering care	38.47%	40.50 or higher
Percent exiting to a permanent home within 12 months for those in care 12-23 months	53.16%	43.60 or higher
Percent exiting to a permanent home within 12 months for those in care 24+ months	48.25%	30.30 or higher
Percentage achieving permanency who do not re-enter care within 12 months	90.41%	91.70 or higher
Rate of placement moves per 1,000 days in out-of-home care	4.48 moves	4.12 or lower

State Measures

Section 409.997, F.S., requires DCF to assess and share information about statewide and regional performance based on statistically valid measures addressing the full system of care. The following table includes the state measure, current performance, and the state target during the second quarter of FY 2019-2020. The current performance indicates the overall health of Florida's child welfare system.

State Measure	Current ³⁸ Performance	State Target
Child protective investigations commenced within 24 hours	99.45%	No state target; higher percentage is better
Victims seen within 24 hours of central abuse hotline report	92.06%	
Child protective investigator supervisor consultations within 5 days	97.04%	
Child protective investigators with social work degrees	13.30%	
No abuse during in-home services	95.07%	
Child protective investigators with 20+ cases	4.28%	No state target; lower percentage is better
Siblings placed together	63.70%	99.5% or higher
Children seen by a case manager every 30 days	99.3%	99.5% or higher
Dental services provided in the last 7 months	91.15%	95% or higher
Medical services provided in last 12 months	95.99%	95% or higher

Federal Child and Family Services Review

The federal Department of Health and Human Services, through the Children's Bureau, conducts periodic Child and Family Services Reviews in each state.³⁹ These reviews assess states' compliance with the federal requirements for child welfare systems in Title IV-B and Title IV-E of the Social Security Act. In particular, the Children's Bureau examines whether desired child outcomes are being achieved

³⁷ Current performance is as of FY 2019-20, Quarter 2.

³⁸ Current performance is as of FY 2019-20, Quarter 2.

³⁹ 45 C.F.R. §1355

and whether the child welfare system is structured appropriately and its processes operate effectively. These have been taking place every four years.

The reviews help states identify strengths and areas needing improvement. The ultimate goal is to help states improve child welfare services and achieve the following seven outcome areas for families and children who receive services:

- Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.
- Children are safely maintained in their homes, whenever possible and appropriate.
- Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.
- The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.
- Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.
- Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.
- Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.⁴⁰

The review also measures state performance on seven systemic factors, including the effectiveness of:

- The statewide child welfare information system
- The case review system.
- The quality assurance system.
- Staff and provider training.
- The service array and resource development.
- The agency's responsiveness to the community.
- Foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention.⁴¹

In two previous rounds of reviews,⁴² no state in the country was in substantial conformity in all of the outcome areas and systemic factors.⁴³ The third review round involved a comprehensive analysis of the child welfare system comprising a statewide assessment, interviews, focus groups, and case reviews.⁴⁴ Through this analysis, the Children's Bureau rates whether a state is in "substantial conformity" with each outcome area and systemic factor. For a state to be in substantial conformity with a particular outcome, 95% or more of the cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome. The substantial conformity assessment for the systemic factors considers information from the statewide assessment, interviews, and focus groups.⁴⁵

The report summarizing Florida's results for the third review round was issued in late 2016. The state was in substantial conformity with 3 of 7 system factors including quality assurance system, staff and provider training, and agency responsiveness to the community.⁴⁶ However, the report indicated the state was not in substantial conformity of any of the 7 outcome areas.

The report acknowledged progress the state has made and strengths on which it is building, such as in ensuring children's stability in foster care placements and establishing timely and appropriate permanency goals for children. The state's standardized assessments are also beneficial in identifying children's and families' needs. However, significant challenges remain. For instance, the Florida 2016 CFSR Report discussed the results of the review of 80 individual cases:

Despite establishing timely and appropriate permanency goals, case review results found that agencies and courts struggle to make concerted efforts to

⁴⁰ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau, *Fact Sheet: Child and Family Services Reviews*, available at https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/cfsr_general_factsheet.pdf (last visited Feb. 27, 2020).

⁴¹ *Id.*

⁴² *Id.* Note that because of differences in how the third round of reviews was conducted, state performance cannot be compared across the reviews.

⁴³ *Id.*

⁴⁴ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau, *Child and Family Services Reviews, Florida Final Report, 2016*, at 1, <http://www.centerforchildwelfare.org/qa/CFSRTools/2016%20CFSR%20Final%20Report.pdf> (last visited Feb. 27, 2020).

⁴⁵ *Id.* at 2.

⁴⁶ *Id.* at 3.

achieve identified permanency goals in a timely manner. Delays in achieving reunification and guardianship goals are affected by case plans not being updated timely to reflect the current needs of the family, delays in referral for services, and failure to engage parents. The agency and court do not make concerted efforts to achieve the goal of adoption timely in nearly half of applicable cases. Barriers affecting timely adoptions include the lack of concurrent planning when a parent's compliance level is minimal, and providing parents additional time to work on case plan goals.

In addition, the report stated:

In over half of applicable cases, the agency failed to make concerted efforts to provide services, removed children without providing appropriate services, or did not monitor safety plans and engage the family in needed safety-related services.

The report went on:

There are concerns with gaps in key services, long waiting lists, insurance barriers, and an inability to tailor services to meet the cultural needs of the diverse population. Substance abuse and domestic violence are the main reasons for the agency's involvement in many cases. The review found that substance abuse, in particular, contributes to various safety concerns for children. Stakeholders noted that there are major gaps in services to address both substance abuse and domestic violence in the non-metro areas of the state.⁴⁷

Once a review is complete, the state formulates a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) to address those outcome areas and systemic factors not in substantial conformity.⁴⁸

Contractor Oversight and Performance

Community-Based Care Organizations

DCF monitors and oversees CBCs. DCF must, at minimum, evaluate each of the CBCs under contract annually.⁴⁹ The evaluations must cover the programmatic, operational, and fiscal operations of the CBC and must be consistent with the child welfare results-oriented accountability system required by s. 409.997, F.S.⁵⁰ DCF may outsource programmatic, administrative, or fiscal monitoring oversight of the CBCs.⁵¹

CBC contracts specify required performance measures.⁵² These generally align with the state and federal measures. The DCF contract manager must periodically identify whether any gaps exist between actual and required CBC performance. If contractor performance is not sufficient, DCF may allow a reasonable period for correction. If the deficiencies are not resolved and there are no extenuating circumstances, DCF must terminate the contract, and DCF may not contract again with the same provider during the next 24 months.⁵³

Current law requires DCF to contract with CBCs to provide for graduated penalties, which can include:

⁴⁷ *Id.* at 4.

⁴⁸ *Supra* note 40.

⁴⁹ S. 409.966(18)(a), F.S.

⁵⁰ *Id.*

⁵¹ S. 409.966(18)(e), F.S.

⁵² July 2019 CBC Services Contract, Contract JK138, pp. 36-37.

⁵³ S. 402.7305(3)(f), F.S.

- Financial penalties, which shall require a CBC to reallocate funds from administrative costs to direct care for children.
- Enhanced monitoring and reporting.
- Corrective action plans. and
- Early termination.⁵⁴

The DCF contracts with the CBCs include an attachment regarding Progressive Intervention and Program Improvement. This outlines a three-stage process of intervention for when a provider is significantly below target on any performance measure, there are serious fiscal concerns, or if quality management review findings identify other serious systemic concerns. These interventions range from requiring corrective action plans to convening Management Peer Review Teams to redirection of contract funds to re-procurement of the contract.⁵⁵

Sheriffs

Current law expressly requires DCF to contract with four sheriffs' offices to perform child protective investigations: Broward, Manatee, Pasco, and Pinellas counties.⁵⁶ The General Appropriations Act (GAA) requires DCF to contract with three more: those in Hillsborough, Seminole and Walton counties. Current law authorizes DCF to contract with other sheriffs to deliver child protective services, but DCF has not chosen to enter into additional contacts.⁵⁷

However, these arrangements are not governed by negotiated contracts under ch. 287, F.S.; rather, they are governed by grant agreements as is required by statute.⁵⁸ The annual GAA includes a specific line item for each sheriff performing this function. The following table provides information on the funding each county sheriff received to conduct child protective investigations through the FY 2019-20 GAA.⁵⁹

Sheriff Office	Appropriations through the FY 2019-20 GAA
Broward County	\$15,201,864
Hillsborough County	\$13,738,700
Manatee County	\$4,855,360
Pasco County	\$6,466,825
Pinellas County	\$11,915,854
Seminole County	\$4,633,803
Walton County	\$860,607

Section 39.3065(3)(b), F.S., requires sheriffs' offices to operate in accordance with performance standards and outcome measures established by the Legislature. The Legislature has not established standards and measures for sheriffs. The grant agreements between DCF and the sheriffs' offices only include three operational measures which are reflected in the annual reports on sheriffs' performance. The annual report for FY 2018-19 included the sheriffs' performance for those three operational measures:

⁵⁴ S. 409.996(1)(b), F.S.

⁵⁵ Florida Department of Children and Families, *General Documents Incorporated by Reference, Community-Based Care Progressive Intervention and Program Improvement*, https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/community-based-care/docs/2011_12/CBC%20Progressive%20Intervention%20and%20Program%20Improvement%20-%2005-10.pdf (last visited Feb. 28, 2020).

⁵⁶ S. 39.3065, F.S.

⁵⁷ *Id.*

⁵⁸ *Id.*

⁵⁹ 2019, HB 5001, General Appropriations Act, Funds in specific appropriation 315 are for DCF to award grants to the sheriffs to conduct child protective investigations.

1. One hundred percent of investigations commenced within 24 hours. The DCF average was 99.42%, with the sheriffs' offices averaging 99.75%.
2. Eighty-five percent of victims seen within 24 hours of receiving a report. The DCF average was 86.87%, with the sheriffs' offices averaging 90.04%.
3. All Child Safety Assessment (CSA) reports reviewed by supervisors in accordance with DCF timeframes. The DCF average was 94.04%, with the sheriffs' offices averaging 95.99%.

The Legislature pays sheriffs more than DCF for performing the same investigation functions. The following tables provide information on expenditures and costs per report received for FY 2016-17 and FY 2017-18. The first table provides information on the expenditures and costs per report for each sheriff's office conducting child protective investigations, while the second table provides information for DCF.

Sheriff Cost and Expenditures Per Report						
Fiscal Year 2016-2017				Fiscal Year 2017-2018		
Agency	Total Cost	Reports	Average Cost Per Report	Total Cost	Reports	Average Cost Per Report
Broward	\$14,122,421	13,368	\$1,056	\$14,333,970	12,914	\$1,110
Hillsborough	\$13,502,257	12,355	\$1,093	\$13,210,040	12,055	\$1,096
Manatee	\$4,719,787	4,107	\$1,149	\$4,855,360	3,857	\$1,259
Pasco	\$6,629,008	6,164	\$1,075	\$6,448,093	6,107	\$1,056
Pinellas	\$11,828,667	9,154	\$1,292	\$11,923,160	8,740	\$1,364
Seminole	\$4,537,152	4,078	\$1,113	\$4,716,152	3,986	\$1,183
All Sheriffs⁶⁰	\$55,339,292	49,226	\$1,124	\$55,486,775	47,659	\$1,164

DCF Cost and Expenditures Per Report						
Fiscal Year 2016-2017				Fiscal Year 2017-2018		
Agency	Total Cost	Reports	Average Cost Per Report	Total Cost	Reports	Average Cost Per Report
Northwest	\$19,404,689	19,454	\$997	\$21,288,262	19,068	\$1,116
Northeast	\$33,389,932	33,958	\$983	\$34,203,185	32,135	\$1,064
Suncoast	\$13,917,462	15,384	\$905	\$14,781,643	14,311	\$1,033
Central	\$47,740,436	47,696	\$1,001	\$49,852,577	46,981	\$1,061
Southeast	\$16,569,244	16,745	\$990	\$16,683,183	15,797	\$1,056
Southern	\$14,669,903	14,504	\$1,011	\$15,033,107	13,478	\$1,115
DCF	\$145,691,666	147,741	\$986	\$151,841,957	141,770	\$1,094

The overall number of reports decreased 3.8 percent from FY 2016-17 to FY 2017-18 statewide, whereas expenditures increased 3.13 percent.⁶¹ During FY 2017-18, the range of costs per report for sheriffs' offices was from \$1,056 to \$1,364. The average cost per report for sheriffs was \$1,164. Comparably, DCF costs ranged from \$1,033 to \$1,116. DCF spends an average of \$1,071 per report.

Section 20.19, F.S., creates the obligation for DCF to perform child welfare functions, including investigations, and makes DCF ultimately responsible for providing those services. However, s. 39.3065(1), F.S., transferred "all responsibility" for child protective investigations to certain sheriffs at the end of FY 1999-2000. These conflicting obligations make DCF's authority unclear. Perhaps for that reason, DCF has limited involvement in the quality assurance process for sheriff provided child

⁶⁰ This does not include data for Walton County, which began providing child protective investigations in July 2018.

⁶¹ Florida Department of Children and Families, *Florida Sheriffs Performing Child Protective Investigations, Annual Program Performance Evaluation Report, Fiscal Year 2017-2018*, https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/child-welfare/docs/2018LMRs/SO%20Annual%20Peer%20Review%20DCF%20Report%202017_2018.pdf (last visited Jan. 26, 2020).

protective services. For instance, while s. 39.3065(3)(d), F.S., requires a peer review⁶² for the sheriffs' program performance evaluation that involves both DCF and the sheriffs, the review team is largely comprised of sheriff's office representatives (five or six sheriff's representatives and two DCF representatives).

Although sheriffs providing child protective investigations are required by the grant agreement to act in accordance with state and federal law, there is no statutory requirement that the sheriffs follow the same procedures and policies, or meet the same outcomes, required for DCF CPIs. DCF tracks the work of its CPIs through a CPI scorecard on its Child Welfare Dashboard.⁶³ The CPI scorecard is used to measure the standards of the child protective investigations across the state, considering six DCF-established measures⁶⁴ to ensure investigations are providing successful outcomes for children and families.⁶⁵ The information on the sheriffs providing child protective investigations is limited on DCF's CPI scorecard because the grant agreements do not require sheriffs to submit the same performance data. Because the Legislature allocates grant funding directly through the GAA to sheriff's offices, DCF does not receive designated resources to provide adequate monitoring of these areas.⁶⁶

Children's Legal Services

DCF directly or through contract provides attorneys to prepare and present cases in dependency court and ensures attorneys provide the court with adequate information for informed decision-making in dependency cases.⁶⁷ Children's Legal Services (CLS) represents the state during dependency cases governed by Ch. 39, F.S. CLS advocates for the safety, well-being, and permanency of Florida's abused, abandoned, and neglected children.⁶⁸ CLS attorneys often become involved in the case when a CPI seeks to remove a child from an unsafe home. The attorneys then work with case management services to ensure families receive necessary services to alleviate unsafe conditions in the home so a child can be reunited with his or her parents. CLS attorneys carry multiple cases and must ensure state and federal legal requirements are met.⁶⁹

Current law requires DCF to contract with the state attorney in the Sixth Judicial Circuit to provide CLS services.⁷⁰ The Attorney General provides CLS services in Hillsborough and Broward Counties.⁷¹

Currently, DCF has little qualitative oversight over delivery of legal services by contract attorneys.⁷²

Child Welfare Workforce

The child welfare workforce provides services and supports to keep vulnerable children and families safe and stable. A well-trained and highly-skilled child welfare workforce is important to producing the best outcomes for children and families. However, states have struggled to retain child welfare

⁶² A peer review team identifies closed investigations for review and develops the review's approach, which assesses compliance with statutory requirements, quality of investigations, safety decisions, and safety actions implemented throughout the life of the case.

⁶³ Florida Department of Children and Families, Office of Child Welfare, *CPI Scorecard*, <https://www.myflfamilies.com/programs/childwelfare/dashboard/cpi-scorecard.shtml> (last visited Jan. 24, 2020).

⁶⁴ These measures include: alleged victims seen within 24 hours; child protective investigations and supervisors with social work degrees; child protective investigators with more than 20 open investigations; investigations commenced within 24 hours; investigations that had an initial supervisory consultation within 5 days; and retention of child protective investigators.

⁶⁵ *Supra* note 61.

⁶⁶ *Id.*

⁶⁷ S. 409.996(17), F.S.

⁶⁸ Florida Department of Children and Families, *Children's Legal Services*, <https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/childrens-legal-services/about-us.shtml> (last visited Jan. 25, 2020).

⁶⁹ *Id.*

⁷⁰ Florida Department of Children and Families, Agency Analysis of 2020 Senate Bill 1326, p. 3 (Jan 21, 2020).

⁷¹ Florida Department of Children and Families, *A Comprehensive, Multi-Year Review of the Revenues, Expenditures, and Financial Position of All Community-Based Care Lead Agencies with System of Care Analysis*, http://www.centerforchildwelfare.org/kb/LegislativeMandatedRpts/Comprehensive_Review_of_Revenues_Expenditures_...pdf (last

visited Jan. 28, 2020).

⁷² *Supra* note 68.

workers. For the last 15 years, turnover for the child welfare workforce has been between 20-40%, with a national average of 30%, with some individual agencies as high as 65%.⁷³ Not only does high turnover put children at risk, but it also cost of the state money. The cost to child welfare agencies can be about \$54,000 per replacement.⁷⁴

During the 2014 Legislative Session, Florida took notice of the issues confronting the child welfare workforce. It established the Florida Institute for Child Welfare (FICW) at the Florida State University College of Social Work to provide research and evaluation that contributes to a more sustainable, accountable, and effective child welfare system. The purpose of the FICW is to advance the well-being of children and families by improving the performance of child protection and child welfare services through research, policy analysis, evaluation, and leadership development.⁷⁵

The FICW is statutorily mandated to perform various functions related to child welfare workforce. The FICW must:

- Maintain a program of research contributing to the scientific knowledge related to child safety, permanency, and child and family well-being.
- Advise DCF and other organizations about scientific evidence regarding child welfare practice, as well as management practices and administrative processes.
- Evaluate training requirements for the child welfare workforce and the effectiveness of training.
- Develop a program of training and consulting to assist organizations with employee retention.

The FICW has focused its research on the state of Florida's child welfare workforce and factors that may be affecting retention. The FICW is conducting a five-year longitudinal study of the child welfare profession, known as the Florida Study of Professionals for Safe Families (FSPSF). The study follows a cohort of newly-hired case managers and child protective investigators (CPIs) for five years to learn about individual, organizational, and community influences on child welfare employee retention. The FSPSF study is in year three.

During an 18-month period, FICW recruited new case managers and CPIs from across the state during pre-service training to participate in the study. FICW surveys the participants every 6-7 months to determine how many employees are leaving and why. The study is examining worker personal characteristics (e.g., educational background, family history, self-esteem), worker beliefs and behaviors (e.g., stress and burnout, work and family balance, social support and coping), organizational characteristics (e.g., physical environment, supervisory and management practices, vacancy rate), and worker characteristics (e.g., caseload size and severity, prevalence of child deaths, and exposure to threats and violence).

The following tables show results from year three of the study, which is approximately two years after pre-service training. The first table shows the percentage of employees among the initial cohort who have left their positions and the second table shows their reasons for departure. By the second year, 68 percent of those in the initial cohort had left the agency.

⁷³ Casey Family Programs, *How Does Turnover Affect Outcomes and What Can be Done to Address Retention?*, https://caseyfamilypro-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/media/HO_Turnover-Costs_and_Retention_Strategies-1.pdf (last visited Jan. 26.2020).

⁷⁴ *Id.*

⁷⁵ S. 1004.615, F.S. Current law requires FICW to establish an affiliate network of public and private universities with accredited degrees in social work. In 2017, the FICW expanded its affiliate network to include research affiliates, and there are now over 50 research faculty affiliates. The FICW sponsors and supports interdisciplinary research projects and program evaluation initiatives that contribute to knowledge relevant to enhancing Florida's child welfare outcomes. The FICW is also required to assess performance of child welfare services based on specified outcome measures; identify and communicate effective policies and promising practices; recommend improvements in the state's child welfare system; and submit annual reports to the Governor and Legislature.

Percent of Employees Who Have Left Position Two Years After Pre-Service Training				
	All Workers (1241)	Case Managers (727)	DCF CPIs (407)	Sheriff CPIs (107)
Employees in the same role since pre-service training	27%	23%	30%	46%
Employees in a different role in the same agency since pre-service training	5%	7%	3%	2%
Employees who have left the agency	68%	70%	67%	52%

Reasons for Departure				
	All Workers (114)	Case Managers (72)	DCF CPIs (31)	Sheriff CPIs (107)
Job responsibilities	24%	21%	31%	27%
Supervision	4%	3%	4%	9%
Agency environment	29%	28%	31%	27%
Family circumstances	12%	10%	17%	9%
Other career opportunities	22%	22%	17%	27%
Involuntary departure	9%	15%	0%	0%

Child Protective Investigators

DCF must conduct a child protective investigation if a central abuse hotline report meets the statutory definition of child abuse, abandonment or neglect. An investigation must be commenced immediately or within 24 hours after the report is received, depending on the nature of the allegation.⁷⁶ The child protective investigator assesses the safety and perceived needs of the child and family, and if services are needed, whether the child should receive in-home or out-of-home services.

CPIs investigate and determine whether child abuse, abandonment or neglect occurred and, if so, identify the individual responsible for the maltreatment. CPIs must conduct and complete an assessment to identify danger threats to the child and whether the parent can protect the child. The CPI must consider whether services would allow the child to remain safely in the home. If not, the CPI must remove the child and place the child in a safe alternative placement. CPIs make critical decisions on child safety by investigating dangerous environments. CPIs must respond to a hotline report no less than 24 hours after its receipt, resulting in CPIs working nights and weekends. Child protective investigations are conducted by DCF in 60 counties. Sheriffs' offices perform child protective investigations in the remaining seven counties.⁷⁷

Currently, there are five types of DCF CPI field positions. The following table provides information on the class title, base pay, and minimum qualifications for each.

⁷⁶ S. 39.301(1), F.S.

⁷⁷ Broward, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas, Seminole, and Walton.

CPI Field Positions		
Class Title	Base Pay	Minimum Qualifications
CPI	\$39,600	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bachelor's degree (preferred degree in social work, behavioral science, nursing, or education field). Must pass a certification exam with a score of at least 80% and attain provisional certification within 3 months of hire. Preference is given to individuals completing DCF's Child Protection Internship.
Senior CPI	\$41,500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bachelor's degree (preferred degree in social work, behavioral science, nursing, or education field). Two years of child protection-related experience. Current Florida Child Protective Investigator certification.
CPI – Field Support Supervisor	\$46,900	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bachelor's degree (preferred: social work, behavioral science, nursing, or education field) Two years of child protection-related experience. Current Florida Child Protective Investigator certification.
CPI Supervisor	\$49,200	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bachelor's degree (preferred: social work, behavioral science, nursing, or education field). Three years of child protection-related experience. One year of coordinating the work of CPIs or supervisory/managerial experience. Current Florida Child Protective Investigator certification.
Critical Child Safety Practice Expert	\$55,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successful completion of the Level 1 and Level 2 Critical Child Safety Practice Proficiency. Bachelor's degree (preferred: social work, behavioral science, nursing or education field). One year of experience as a Florida Child Welfare Professional.

Career Advancement for CPIs

Organizations that provide pathways for career advancement help employees see potential for career progression. A career ladder is a formal process within an organization for an employee to advance.⁷⁸ Career ladders contribute to a well-trained and motivated workforce and a higher retention rate.⁷⁹

DCF attempted to create a type of career advancement incentive in 2017 with the implementation of the Child Protection Glide Path. The Glide Path was to increase recruitment and retention of critical staff positions.⁸⁰ It allowed CPIs to demonstrate specific skills and core competencies associated with their class title to achieve a competency-based increase in salary.⁸¹

The Child Protection Glide Path divided CPI positions into five class titles with the CPI class title having three salary levels based on skills and core competencies achieved. However, in June 2019, DCF discontinued the Child Protection Glide Path for a new Career Path initiative designed to increase employee satisfaction and retention.

Education Qualifications for CPIs

In 2014, the Legislature passed a bill mandating DCF to recruit qualified professional staff and required DCF to make every effort to recruit and hire social workers. Section 402.402(1), F.S., requires DCF to

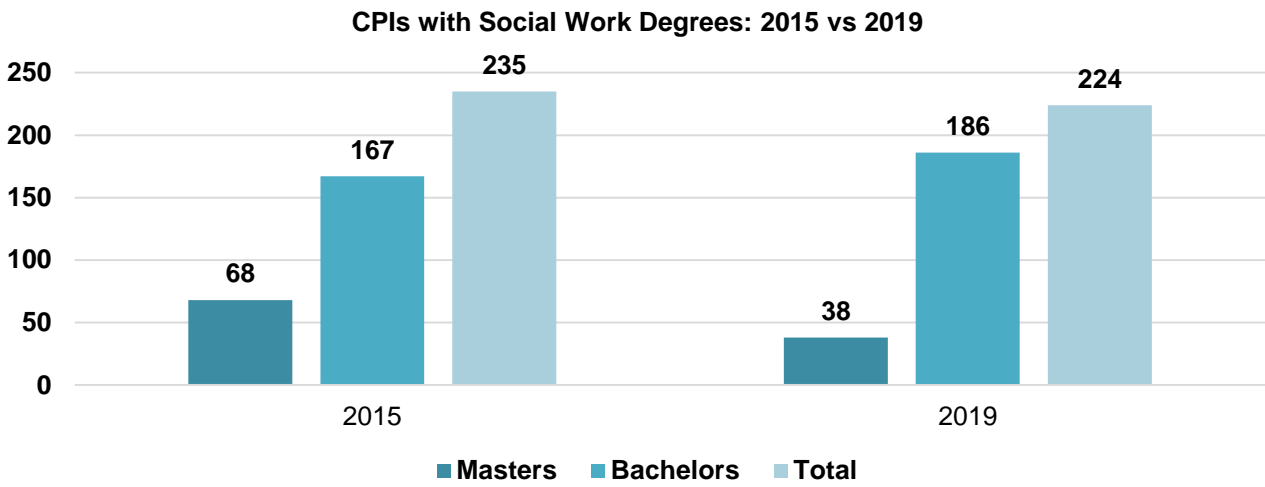
⁷⁸ The Balance Careers, *The Benefits of Career Ladders*, <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/how-career-ladders-benefit-organizations-1669368> (last visited Jan. 21, 2019).

⁷⁹ *Id.*

⁸⁰ Florida Department of Children and Families, *Child Protective Investigator and Child Protective Supervisor Educational Qualifications, Turnover, and Working Conditions Status Report*, Oct. 1, 2019, <http://www.centerforchildwelfare.org/kb/LegislativeMandatedRpts/CPI%20SuperCPI%20and%20CPI%20Supervisor%20%20Workforce%202019%20.docx.pdf> (last visited Apr. 2, 2020).

⁸¹ *Id.*

set a goal of having at least half of all CPIs and CPI supervisors with a bachelor's degree or master's degree in social work from a college or university social work program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education by July 1, 2019.⁸² DCF has made little, if any, progress in achieving this goal. In 2018, 15 percent of CPIs held a degree in social work; that number has decreased to 13 percent as of June 30, 2019. The following graph shows the total number of CPIs with a social work degree, and how many of those have a bachelor's degree or a master's degree, in 2015 compared to those in 2019.⁸³



Turnover and Vacancies of CPIs

DCF has had high turnover for CPIs for years. Currently, 30 percent of CPIs have been in their position more than two years. High turnover affects outcomes for children, because newly-hired CPIs lack the knowledge gained from on-the-job experience. This may result in potential risk to child safety due to the lack of experience in a majority of CPIs. The turnover rate for all CPI positions over the past two years has averaged around 37 percent.⁸⁴

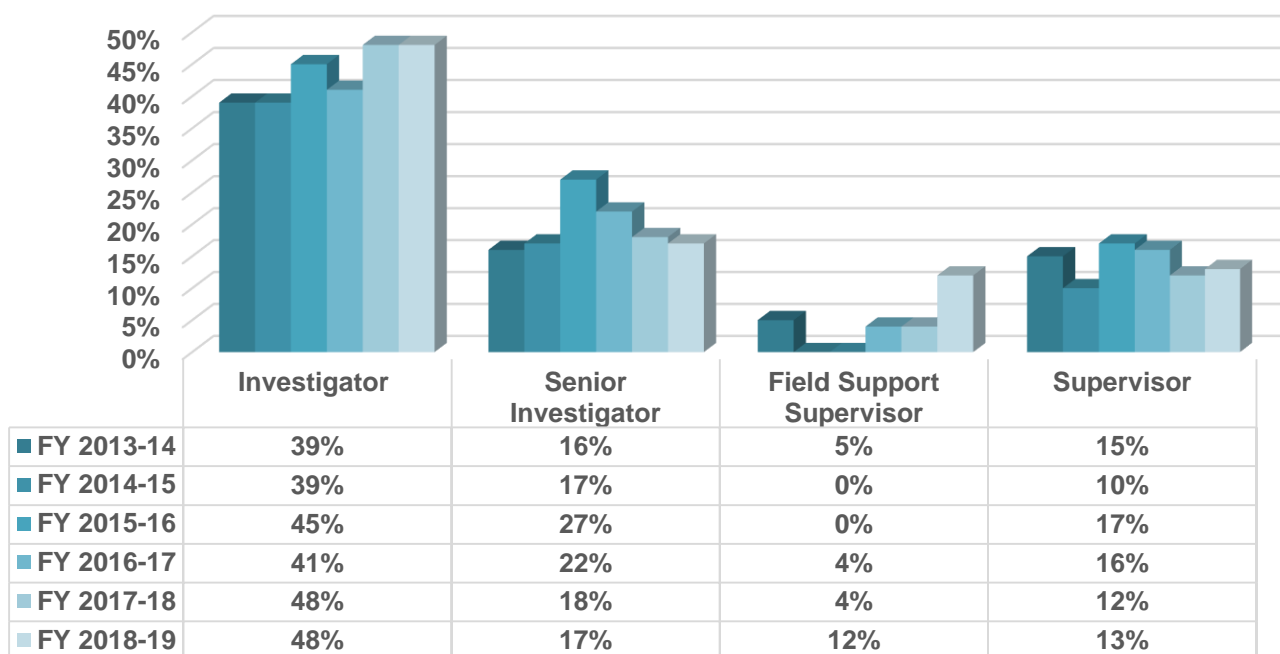
The following graph shows CPI turnover by position from FY 2013-14 through FY 2018-19. The highest turnover is in the entry-level CPI position, which was 48 percent during FY 2018-19.

⁸² Research has found that child welfare employees with social work degrees have better direct outcome measures than child welfare employees with other degrees and score better on exams assessing knowledge and merit or competency and skills pertaining to child welfare practice than other child welfare employees. See Rubin, A. and Parrish, S., *Comparing Social Worker and Non-Social Worker Outcomes: A Research Review*, National Association of Social Workers, Vol. 57, Issue 4, Oct. 2012, Pg. 309-320.

⁸³ Florida Department of Children and Families, Office of Child Welfare, *Child Protective Investigators and Supervisors with a Social Work Degree – Statewide*, <https://www.myflfamilies.com/programs/childwelfare/dashboard/education.shtml> (last visited Jan. 27, 2020).

⁸⁴ Florida Department of Children and Families, *Child Protective Investigator and Child Protective Supervisor Educational Qualifications, Turnover, and Working Conditions Status Report*, Oct. 1, 2019, <http://www.centerforchildwelfare.org/kb/LegislativeMandatedRpts/CPI%20SuperCPI%20and%20CPI%20Supervisor%20%20Workforce%202019%20.docx.pdf> (last visited Jan. 26, 2020).

DCF CPI Turnover by Position: FY 2013-14 - FY 2018-19



High staff turnover puts vulnerable children at risk for recurrence of abuse, abandonment or neglect and hinders timely intervention and permanency. For example, inexperienced investigators may not recognize indicators of abuse and may leave children in dangerous situations. Alternatively, they may not be aware of services that prevent removal and choose to place children in out-of-home care unnecessarily. When investigator positions are vacant or newly-hired investigators have reduced caseloads, the remaining staff must carry higher caseloads, which leads to burnout from workload and reduces the time and attention they can give to each case, diminishing the quality of their work. Additionally, staff turnover costs the state money because of the associated expenses of training and onboarding new staff. For example, after hire, staff enter a multi-week training program and then carry a minimal number of cases, so the investment in new hires from salary and training costs is significant before they begin carrying a full caseload.

DCF CPI Survey Results

DCF conducts an annual survey to CPIs for their input on current work conditions. The survey includes numerical scaling as well as the opportunity to provide written feedback on which factors most directly affect morale and the overall work environment.⁸⁵ The 2019 survey had a 39 percent participation rate.⁸⁶ Survey results consistently report that working as a CPI can be overwhelming, with unmanageable workloads leading to little personal life. CPIs also consistently disagree that training provided by DCF prepared them for the job.⁸⁷ This is important because high-quality pre-service training retains child welfare workers and promotes positive child outcomes.⁸⁸ The following graph compares survey results from FY 2015 through FY 2019.

⁸⁵ *Id.*
⁸⁶ Of the 641 respondents, 36 percent had less than one year on the job, 36 percent had one to two years' experience, 16 percent had two to four years' experience, and 12 percent had five or more years' experience.
⁸⁷ *Supra* note 80.
⁸⁸ Mandell, D., Stalker, C., de Zeeus Wright, M. Frensch, K., & Harvey, C. (2013), Sinking, swimming and sailing: Experiences of job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion in child welfare employees, *Child & Family Social Work*, 18, 181-393.

Percent of Child Investigations Workforce who Agree or Strongly Agree with Statement, by Year



Secondary Traumatic Stress in Child Welfare Professionals

Secondary traumatic stress and burnout from job-related activities is a leading cause of high turnover in the child welfare profession. Secondary traumatic stress is the emotional duress when an individual hears about firsthand trauma in the experiences of another.⁸⁹ Child welfare professionals engage daily with people who have experienced trauma. Case managers and CPIs hear about the abuse and neglect children have suffered, and the act of listening to traumatic stories can take an emotional toll that compromises a worker’s professional and personal life.⁹⁰ Given the nature of the work in which child welfare professionals engage, they are at a high risk of developing secondary traumatic stress. Studies have shown that secondary traumatic stress predicts whether a professional will leave the field

⁸⁹ The National Child Traumatic Stress Network, *Secondary Traumatic Stress: A Fact Sheet for Child-Serving Professionals*, https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/fact-sheet/secondary_traumatic_stress_child_serving_professionals.pdf (last visited Jan. 24, 2020).

⁹⁰ *Id.*

for another line of work. Symptoms and conditions associated with secondary traumatic stress can include:

- Hypervigilance.
- Hopelessness.
- Inability to listen
- Avoidance of clients.
- Anger and cynicism.
- Sleeplessness.
- Fear.
- Chronic exhaustion.
- Guilt.
- Minimizing.
- Physical ailments.

Evidence shows that a way to mitigate secondary traumatic stress is to provide a supportive work environment that encourages self-care activities and supervisors who know how to help with secondary traumatic stress in their employees.⁹¹ Organizations should also inform workers about secondary traumatic stress so they know when to seek assistance.⁹²

The FICW analyzed data from their FSPSF study of child welfare workers at 12 months into the job to examine how the frequency of self-care activities impacts job satisfaction, burnout, stress, time pressure, secondary traumatic stress, work self-efficacy, and work/family balance.⁹³ FICW asked workers how frequently they engaged in physical, emotional, and spiritual health activities in the last month. Overall, about half of the child welfare workers indicated they engaged in some type of self-care activity. Weekly activities supporting emotional health improved work-related outcomes, and engaging in physical self-care improved all outcomes except secondary trauma.⁹⁴ Based on its analysis, FICW found that weekly self-care activities focusing on physical and emotional health improves employment outcomes that are often associated with turnover. The FICW recommended that agencies should support the importance of self-care and develop a culture of promoting self-care in the child welfare profession.⁹⁵

Community Alliances

In 2000, the Legislature amended s. 20.19, F.S., to include community alliances as an element of the state's community-based care child welfare system. Section 20.19(5), F.S., requires DCF to work with local communities to establish a community alliance or similar group of stakeholders, community leaders, client representatives and funders of human services in each county to provide a focal point for community participation and governance of community-based services.

Community alliances:

- Plan resource utilization in the community, including DCF and local funding;
- Assess needs and establish community priorities for service delivery;
- Determine community outcome goals to supplement state-required outcomes;
- Serve as a catalyst for community resource development;
- Provide community education and advocacy on delivery of services; and

⁹¹ The National Child Traumatic Stress Network, *Secondary Trauma and Child Welfare Staff: Guidance for Supervisors and Administrators*, https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/secondary_trauma_child_welfare_staff_guidance_for_supervisors.pdf (Jan. 24, 2020).

⁹² *Id.*

⁹³ The Florida Study of Professionals for Safe Families, *Examining the Impact of Self-Care on Work Related Outcomes*, <https://ficw.fsu.edu/sites/g/files/upcbnu1106/files/Research%20Briefs/FSPSF-Examining%20the%20Impact%20of%20Self-Care%20on%20Work-related%20Outcomes-190924.pdf> (last visited Jan. 24, 2020).

⁹⁴ *Id.*

⁹⁵ *Id.*

- Promote prevention and early intervention services.⁹⁶

Initially, community alliances must include members from:

- DCF;
- County government;
- The school district;
- The county United Way;
- The county sheriff's office;
- The circuit court corresponding to the county; and
- The county children's board, if one exists.⁹⁷

After the initial meeting of the community alliance, it may increase its membership to include the state attorney for the judicial circuit, the public defender, and other individuals who represent funding organizations, are community leaders, have knowledge of community-based service issues, or represent perspectives that will enable them to accomplish the duties of the community alliances.⁹⁸

The community alliances are a central point for community input and collaboration and build on the community-based care model of building partnerships in the community to affect the outcomes, quality effectiveness, and efficiency of services. The role of the community alliances is to encourage community involvement to influence outcomes for children and their families.⁹⁹

Community-Based and Faith-Based Organizations

Community-based and faith-based organizations have a history of providing assistance for those in need in their local communities. Florida has recognized these organizations could assist the work of the state. In 2004, Governor Bush signed an Executive Order¹⁰⁰ creating the Governor's Faith-Based and Community-based Advisory Board, and, in 2006, the Legislature codified the advisory board in statute as the Florida Faith-based and Community-based Advisory Council (council). The purpose of the council is to advise the Governor and the Legislature on policies, priorities, and objectives for the state's effort "to enlist, equip, empower, and expand the work of faith-based, volunteer, and other community organizations to the full extent permitted by law."¹⁰¹ Past activities of the council have included promoting Florida's efforts to strengthen systems to better recruit families to meet the needs of children and youth awaiting adoption by providing information to and assisting faith-based and community-based groups in their efforts to match families with children and youth awaiting adoption.

Current law does not require the community alliances to identify existing programs and services delivered by community-based and faith-based organizations. Additionally, the initial membership of the community alliances does not include a representative of a faith-based organization involved in providing services to strengthen families and protect child-welfare.

Effect of the Bill

The bill makes numerous changes to the state child welfare system to strengthen accountability for child welfare providers and address high turnover among child welfare professionals. The bill creates a new accountability system to ensure children and families are receiving quality services from DCF and its providers. The bill also expands functions of the FICW to better support child welfare professionals

⁹⁶ S. 20.19(5)(b), F.S.

⁹⁷ S. 20.19(5)(d), F.S.

⁹⁸ *Id.*

⁹⁹ Department of Children and Families, *Community Alliances Resource Handbook*, (Dec. 2000).

¹⁰⁰ Executive Order No. 04-245, November 18, 2004. This Executive Order was amended by Executive Order No. 05-24, February 1, 2005, which incorporated by reference all of the first order, extended the time for a written report of the advisory board, and provided a January 1, 2007, expiration date for the order.

¹⁰¹ Ch. 2006-9, L.O.F.; codified as s. 14.31, F.S.

to contribute to a more stable child welfare workforce. Additionally, the bill encourages the work of community- and faith-based organizations to have a bigger role in the overall system of care.

Accountability

The bill creates a new accountability system for DCF and its providers to hold them accountable for high levels of performance.

Office of Quality

The bill amends s. 402.175, F.S., to establish the DCF Office of Quality to ensure DCF and providers meet high levels of performance. The duties of the office include, at a minimum:

- Identifying performance standards and metrics for DCF programs and all service providers, including managing entities, CBCs, and attorney services. The performance standards and metrics must be included in DCF's strategic plan and must, at a minimum, have the same child welfare ROAP performance standards.
- Strengthening DCF's data and analytic capabilities to identify systemic strengths and deficiencies.
- Recommending initiatives to correct any deficiencies.
- Engaging and collaborating with stakeholders to improve quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of DCF's programs and services.
- Reporting consistent performance failures to DCF's Secretary for corrective action.

Results-Oriented Accountability Program

The bill strengthens ROAP by adding judicial circuits as a unit of the ROAP analysis. The bill also expands ROAP's data and measurements to include performance drivers, short and long-term outcomes, process improvements and qualifying improvement efforts. It allows DCF to use this data to determine contractor compliance and as the basis for performance incentive payments.

Circuit-Level Child Welfare Performance

To promote the achievement of the highest levels of quality, the bill requires DCF, in collaboration with CBCs and other community stakeholders, to develop a statewide accountability system to measure the overall health of the child welfare system. The accountability system must:

- Assess the overall health of the child welfare system by circuit, using grading criteria established by DCF.
- Include a quality measurement system to measure the performance standards for CPIs, CBCs, and children's legal services throughout the system of care, using criteria established by DCF, and, at a minimum, address applicable federal- and state-mandated metrics.
- Align with the principles of ROAP.

DCF and CBCs must use the information from the new accountability system to promote enhanced quality service and delivery within their respective areas of responsibility.

DCF must submit a report on the overall health of the child welfare system to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by December 1 of each year.

Pilot Project

The bill creates a pilot project in the Sixth and Thirteenth Judicial Circuits aimed at improving child welfare outcomes, and authorizes project funding and performance incentive funding, subject to appropriations. These circuits include Hillsborough, Pasco, and Pinellas counties and are served by Eckerd Community Alternatives.

In implementing the pilot project, DCF is required to establish performance metrics and standards to assess improvements in safety, permanency, and well-being of children in the two judicial circuits. The bill requires the metrics and standards to align with indicators used in the federal Child and Family Services Reviews.

The CBCs in the Sixth and Thirteenth Judicial Circuits must provide performance data to DCF each quarter. DCF must review the data and compare the actual performance of the CBCs to DCF's performance metrics and standards. If the CBC exceeds DCF's performance metrics and standards, it is eligible for incentive funding.

The bill requires DCF to include the results of the pilot project and its related findings and recommendations in an annual report,.

The bill sunsets the pilot project on July 1, 2022.

Contractor Performance

Community-Based Care Lead Agencies

The bill requires DCF to ensure that CBCs are delivering services in accordance with performance standards and metrics specified in DCF's strategic plan. The bill also specifies tiered interventions DCF may use if CBCs fail to comply with contracted terms or in the event of performance deficiencies. Such interventions include, but are not limited to:

- Enhanced monitoring and reporting.
- Corrective action plans.
- Requirements for contracted providers to accept technical assistance and consultation from DCF.
- Financial penalties, which shall require CBCs to reallocate funds from administrative costs to direct care for children.
- Early termination of contracts, as provided in s. 402.1705(3)(f), F.S.

The bill allows DCF to provide technical assistance and consultation to CBCs as necessary for the achievement of performance standards, including, but not limited to, providing additional resources to assist the CBCs to implement best practices or institute operational efficiencies.

Sheriffs and Contracted Attorneys

The bill requires all sheriffs that provide child protective services to operate in accord with the same federal performance standards imposed on DCF staff. Additionally, it requires sheriffs not specified in statute, and contracted attorneys, to adopt DCF's child welfare practice model and operate in accord with the same standards as DCF staff.

The bill also directs sheriffs and contracted attorneys to collaborate with DCF on federal and state quality assurance and quality improvement initiatives. The bill requires DCF to conduct an annual evaluation of the performance of all sheriffs and contracted attorneys. For sheriffs specified in statute, the evaluation will be based on the same performance standards that are not specific to or based on the child welfare practice model that are imposed on DCF staff.

This will ensure that DCF's partners who provide the same services as DCF staff will be held to the same standards, processes, and outcome measures and that performance information will be more readily available.

The bill makes other conforming changes to statutes relating to contractor oversight and quality assurance.

Child Welfare Workforce

Social Work Education

The bill expands the functions of the FICW to inform, train, and engage social work students for a successful career in child welfare. The FICW and the FSU College of Social Work will work together to redesign the social work curriculum using interactive and interdisciplinary approaches and include opportunities for students to engage more with child welfare cases. The bill directs the FICW to disseminate the curriculum to other interested state universities and colleges and provide implementation support. Additionally, by November 1, 2020, the FICW will execute a contract for an evaluation of the curriculum. The FSU College of Social Work is to implement the curriculum during the 2021-2022 school year.

Child Welfare Workforce Professional Development

The bill directs the FICW to design and implement a career-long professional development curriculum for child welfare professionals at all levels and from all disciplines. The professional development curriculum must enhance the performance of the current child welfare workforce, address issues related to retention, complement the redesigned social work curriculum and be developed using social work principles. Through the FICW, the professional development curriculum will provide career-long coaching, training, certification, and mentorship. The FICW must provide the professional support on a continuous basis through online and in-person services.

Finally, the bill requires the FICW to establish a consulting program for child welfare organizations to enhance workforce culture, supervision, and related management processes to improve retention, effectiveness, and overall staff well-being. The FICW will select interested child welfare organizations through a competitive application process and provide support from a team of experts on a long-term basis to address operational workforce challenges. This will create positive workplace environments for the child welfare staff who have engaged in the FICW's other workforce development efforts under the bill.

These efforts may lead to better retention of the child welfare workforce and improve service quality.

Child Protective Investigators

The bill directs DCF, in collaboration with the FICW, to develop an expanded CPI career ladder. The career ladder must include multiple levels of CPI classifications, corresponding milestones and professional development opportunities necessary for advancement, and compensation ranges. DCF must develop and submit a proposal for the expanded career ladder to the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the Governor no later than October 1, 2020. The expanded career ladder is to provide clear pathways for career advancement for CPI professionals.

Additionally, the bill directs DCF to implement policies and programs that prevent and mitigate the impact of secondary traumatic stress and burnout among CPIs. The policies and programs include:

- Initiatives to encourage and inspire investigations staff, including posting material recognizing their achievements on a recognition wall within their unit's office.
- Formal procedures for providing support to relevant CPI staff after a critical incident such as a child fatality.
- Initial training upon appointment to a supervisory position and annual continuing education for all supervisors on preventing secondary traumatic stress and burnout among employees they supervise.
- Monitoring levels of secondary traumatic stress and burnout among individual employees and intervening as needed. DCF must closely attend to the levels of secondary traumatic stress and burnout among employees during the first two years after hire.

- Ongoing training in self-care for all CPI staff.

The programs may also include elements such as formal peer counseling and support programs. These policies and programs will address the secondary traumatic stress and burnout CPIs experience on the job, which can lead to a high turnover rate.

Community- and Faith-Based Organizations

The bill requires the local community alliances to include as a member an individual representing faith-based organizations involved in efforts to prevent child maltreatment, strengthen families, or promote adoption. The bill also includes as an alliance duty to work with community- and faith-based organizations to encourage their involvement in the community system of care and connect them with CBCs. The bill requires the community alliance to ensure the CBCs are aware of programs provided by community- and faith-based organizations, and assist and work to facilitate the CBCs' appropriate use of such resources.

Additionally, the bill directs CBCs to name a staff member as a liaison to community- and faith-based organizations and have a process for ensuring CBCs are aware of the services these organizations offer.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2020.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

The bill significantly expands functions of the FICW, much of which will be contracted out to the FSU College of Social Work and other members of the affiliate network established by the FICW under current law. The General Appropriations Act (GAA) for FY 2020-21 includes \$5,000,000 in recurring general revenue to expand the functions of the FICW at FSU to implement the bill's provisions.¹⁰²

The bill establishes a DCF Office of Quality and requires DCF to establish a quality improvement program for all DCF functions. The GAA for FY 2020-21 includes \$5,350,000 to fund the quality assurance program, including the Office of Quality.¹⁰³ The program will consist of two units that will conduct case reviews and on-site reviews across the child welfare and behavioral health systems of care.

Additionally, the GAA for FY 2020-21 includes \$3,863,739 for the CBC that serves the 6th judicial circuit and \$4,371,313 for the CBC that serves the 13th judicial circuit to implement the bill's pilot

¹⁰² 2020, HB 5001, General Appropriations Act, specific appropriation 150 provides recurring general revenue to the Florida Institute for Child Welfare at Florida State University to implement the provisions relating to the Institute in CS/SB 1326 and are contingent upon the bill, or substantially similar legislation, becoming law.

¹⁰³ 2020, HB 5001, General Appropriations Act, specific appropriations 288, 290, and 294, provides DCF general revenue for the establishment of the Office of Quality for the purpose of monitoring and improving the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of DCF programs and services.

project to establish performance standards to assess the outcomes of children served in the two judicial circuits.¹⁰⁴

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

The bill's impact on the private sector is unknown. To the degree a CBC is not currently working with community-based and faith-based organizations, it will need to make an effort to form relationships and inform staff of the services offered. However, this may reduce the CBC's expenditures on services if the services provided by community-based and faith-based organizations reduce the number of families needing CBC services or the amount of time families need services paid for by the CBC. Additionally, increasing the services provided to children and families may lead to better outcomes for children, such as achieving permanency for children more quickly.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

None.

¹⁰⁴ 2020, HB 5001, General Appropriations Act, specific appropriation 330, provides general revenue to the CBC that serves the 6th judicial circuit and the CBC that serves the 13th judicial circuit to implement the pilot projects that improve the safety, permanency, and well-being of children in the local child welfare system of care.