

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
Department of Human Services
Division of Family and Children's Services



Mississippi FY 2012
FFY October 1, 2011 to September 30, 2012
Annual Progress and Services Report
Submitted June 26, 2013
<http://www.mdhs.state.ms.us/links.html>

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Annual Progress and Services Report

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I. ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

Mississippi's Division of Family and Children's Services (DFCS) state-administered child welfare system is administered at the local level by 84 county offices through thirteen Regional Directors. A central strength to this system lies in the flexibility afforded each region to determine how best to meet the needs of children and families. The Regional Directors take an active part in the operations of the county offices within their region. Each Regional Director has a Regional Area Social Work Supervisor (ASWS) who that assists with the day-to-day operations and frees the Regional Director to deal with the major issues within the regions. Each region also has a Resource Area Social Work Supervisor to supervise and monitor the licensure and adoption workers of DFCS' services on a regional basis. Each region and other service providers, such as contractors and community-based organizations, provide a wide variety of services to children and families. These services include programs designed to strengthen families, reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect, and support and preserve families.

Under the umbrella of the Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS), the Division of Family and Children's Services is the agency authorized by state statute to promulgate regulations, policies and procedures necessary to implement the state's child welfare system and to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being for Mississippi's families and children. The DFCS is responsible for the Title IV-B Subpart 1 (Child Welfare Services), IV-B Subpart 2 (Promoting Safe and Stable Families), Title IV-E (Foster Care and Adoption Assistance), Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) and Educational Training Voucher (ETV).

Vision, Mission and Principles

A. DFCS Vision Statement

Our vision is that children grow up in families, safe from harm, without fear of constant disruption and that they have the opportunity to experience continuity of relationships. We have a vision of children having stability and of having a sense of belonging. Further, our vision is that no child under our "watch" continue to experience abuse or neglect and that families change for the better as a result of our intervention.

B. DFCS Mission Statement

Our mission is to lead Mississippi in protecting children and youth from abuse, neglect and exploitation by providing services to promote safe and stable families.

In addition to the Mission and Principles, a renewed focus has been placed on Family Centered Practice. Family Centered Practice requires the entire system of care seek to engage the family system in helping improve the family's ability to safely parent their children. The Mississippi Department of Human Services, Division of Family and Children's Services, has identified six values that will be honored in working with clients, community partners and each other:

- Competence: We have technical skills and knowledge; we work with common sense; we make informed decisions; and we follow through to achieve successful outcomes.
- Integrity: We are honest in our interactions; we are accountable for our actions; and we do the right thing.
- Responsibility: We do what we say we are going to do; we take initiative.
- Respect: We treat others with kindness, compassion, dignity, and honor differences of our clients and each other.
- Personal Courage: We are loyal to the Mission of DFCS; we advocate for our clients; we lead by example even when doing so carries risk.
- Collaboration: We make decisions for the common good; we share resources based on need; we work together effectively in teams; and work with a collective knowledge of all programs and services.

C. Organizational Structure

DFCS entered a reorganization plan in cooperation with the Division of Human Resources and the Mississippi State Personnel Board in 2011-2012, creating positions filled by personnel with a vast amount of knowledge and experience in the social service field, finance and legal fields, and additional reorganization to meet the needs of DFCS:

- Deputy Administrator of Family and Children's Services
- Director of Family and Children's Services
- Director of Field Operations
- Bureau Director of Performance Quality and Improvement
- Bureau Director of Finance
- Bureau Director of Administration
- Bureau Director of Child Welfare Professional Development
- Bureau Director of Resource Development
- Bureau Director of Permanency
- Bureau Director of Prevention/Protection
- Bureau Director of Policy
- Council of Accreditation Coordinator

Currently, the Deputy Administrator oversees the entire operations of DFCS with emphasis on the Council of Accreditation, Professional Development Services, DFCS Policy Services, Communications, the *Olivia Y. Settlement Agreement* and Administrative Support.

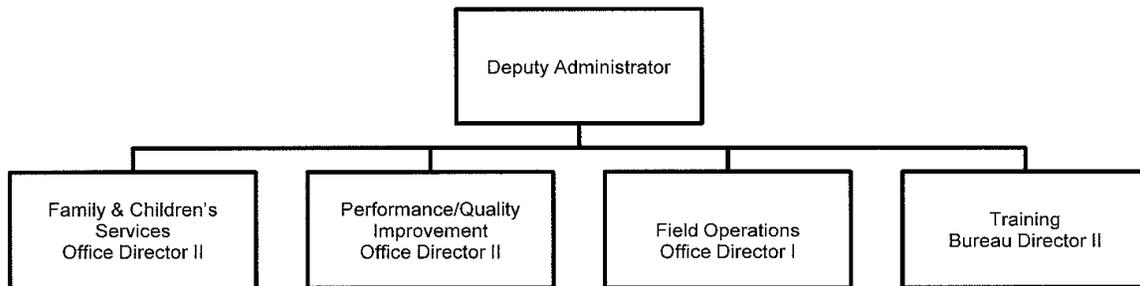
In January 2012, Richard A. Berry became the Executive Director of MDHS. Mark Smith became the Acting Deputy Administrator for the Division of Family and Children's Services (DFCS) upon the retirement of Lori Woodruff in April 2012. Mike Gallarno became the Director of Family and Children's Services upon the retirement of Linda Millsap. As of April 1, 2013, Kim Shackelford became the Deputy Administrator for the Division of Family and Children's Services. Also, in 2013, two Field Operations staff were hired for the northern and southern parts

of the State to coordinate the Mississippi Child Welfare Practice Model implementation (Practice Model).

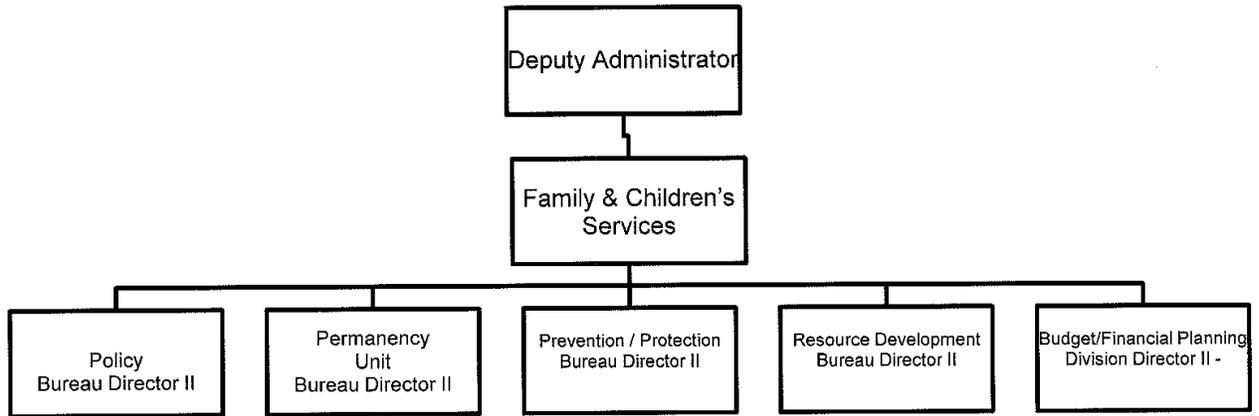
DFCS field operations are divided into thirteen Regions designated as follows (see Map):

- Region 1 North
- Region 1 South
- Region 2 East
- Region 2 West
- Region 3 North
- Region 3 South
- Region 4 North
- Region 4 South
- Region 5 East
- Region 5 West
- Region 6
- Region 7 East
- Region 7 West

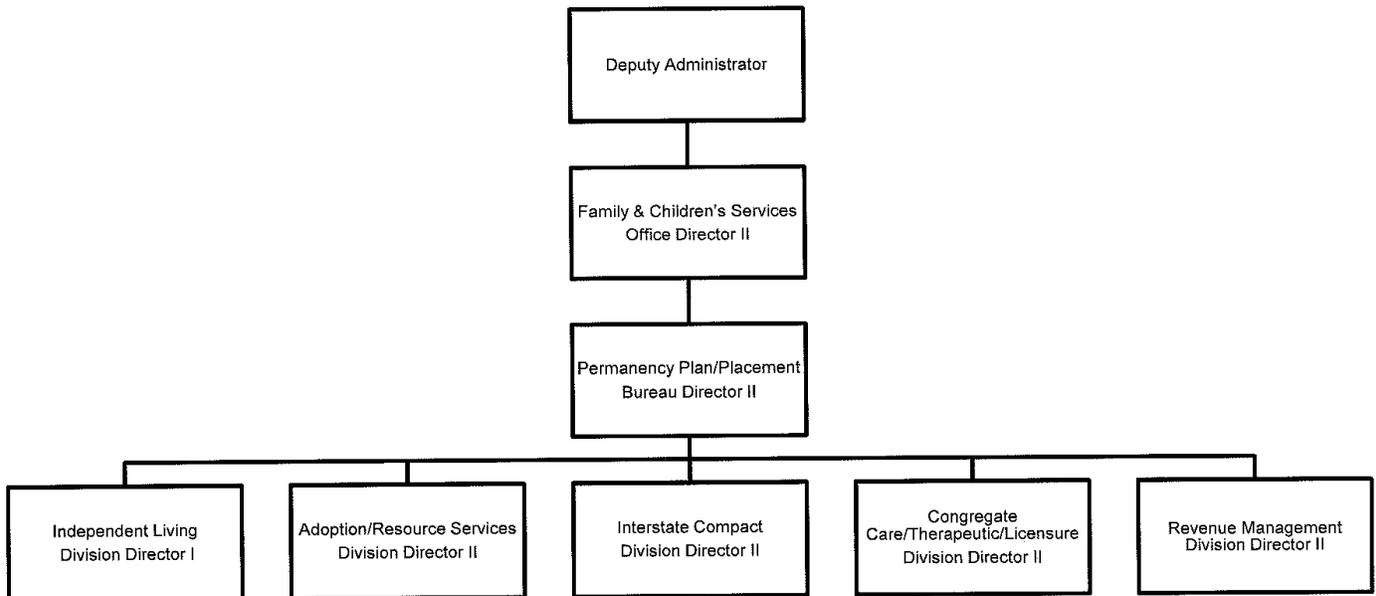
Deputy Administrator of Division of Family & Children's Services and Offices:



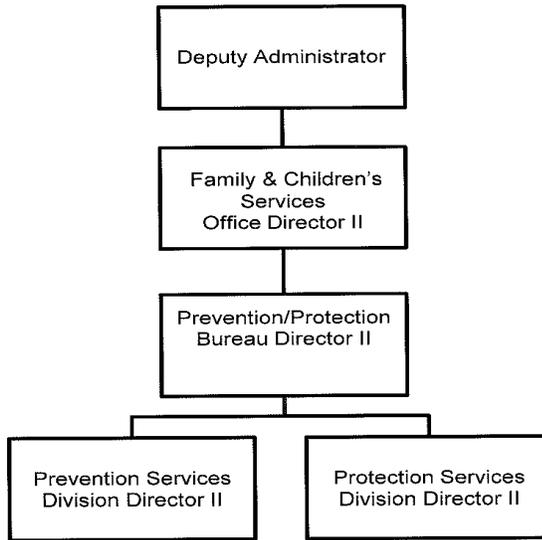
Office of Family and Children's Services:



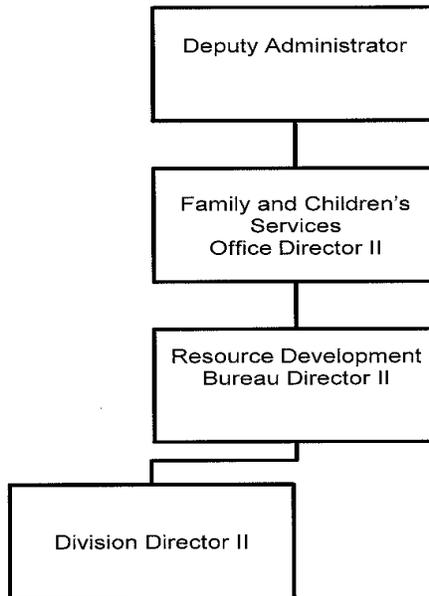
Permanency Unit:



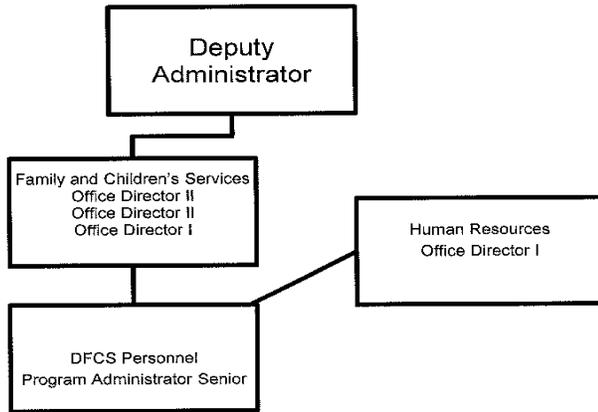
Prevention/Protection Unit:



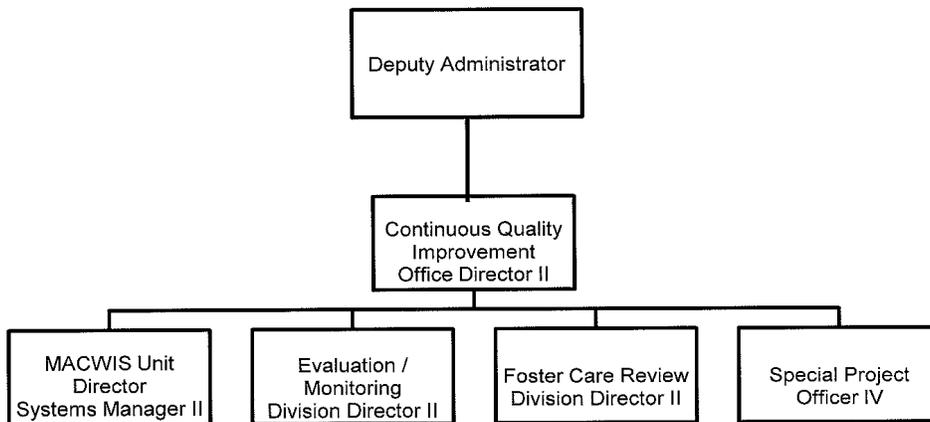
Resource Development Unit:



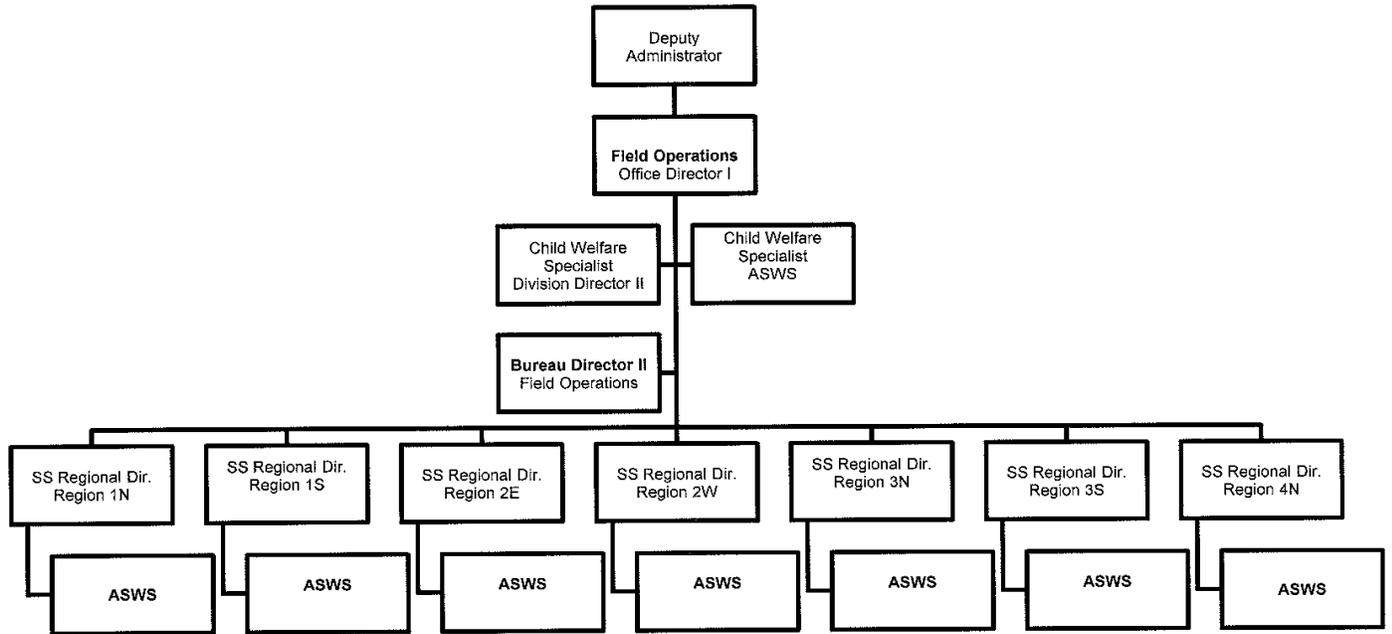
DFCS personnel: Hiring



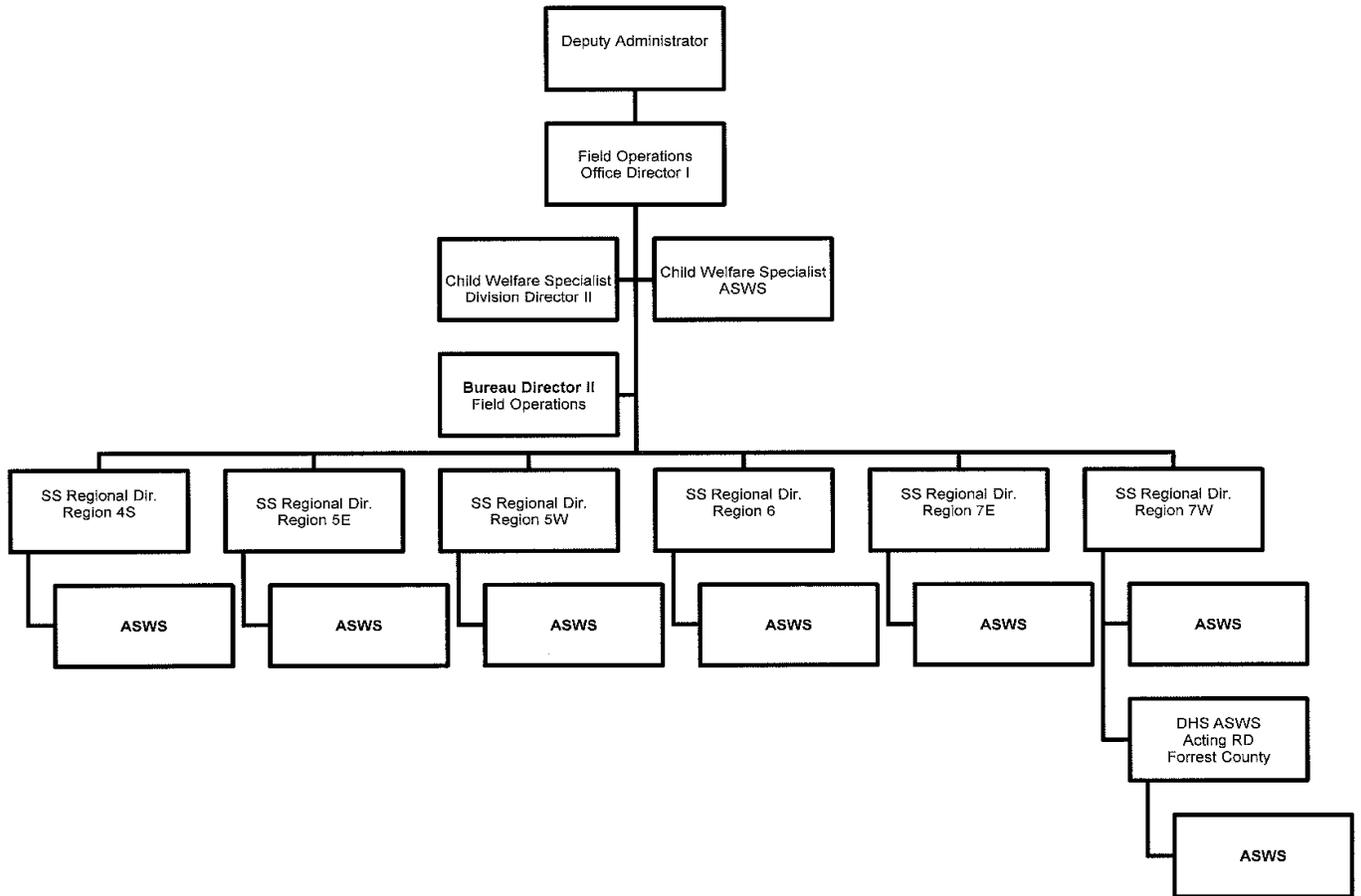
Office of Continuous Quality Improvement:



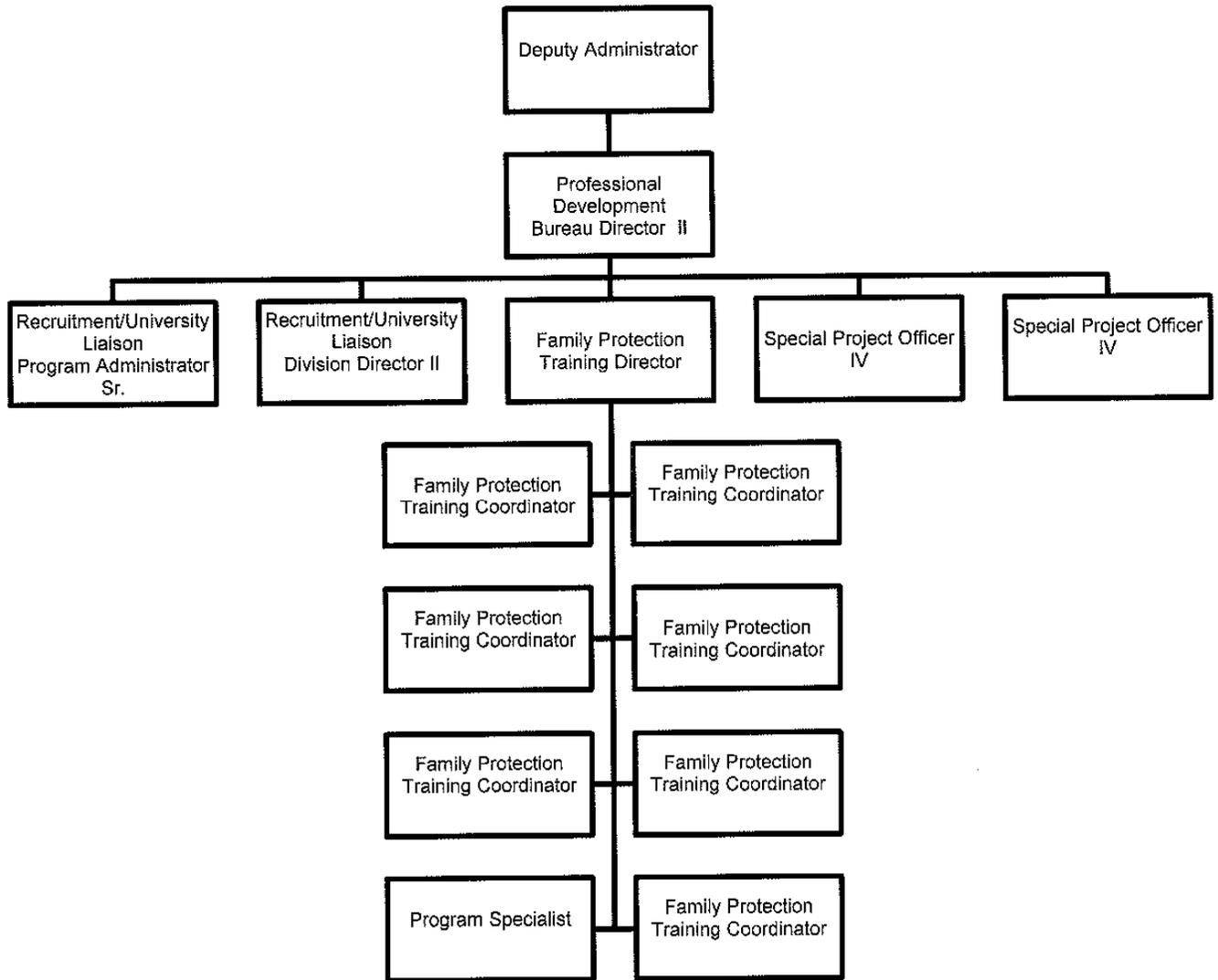
Office of Field Operations: Region I-North – Region IV-North



Office of Field Operations: Region IV-South – Region VII-West



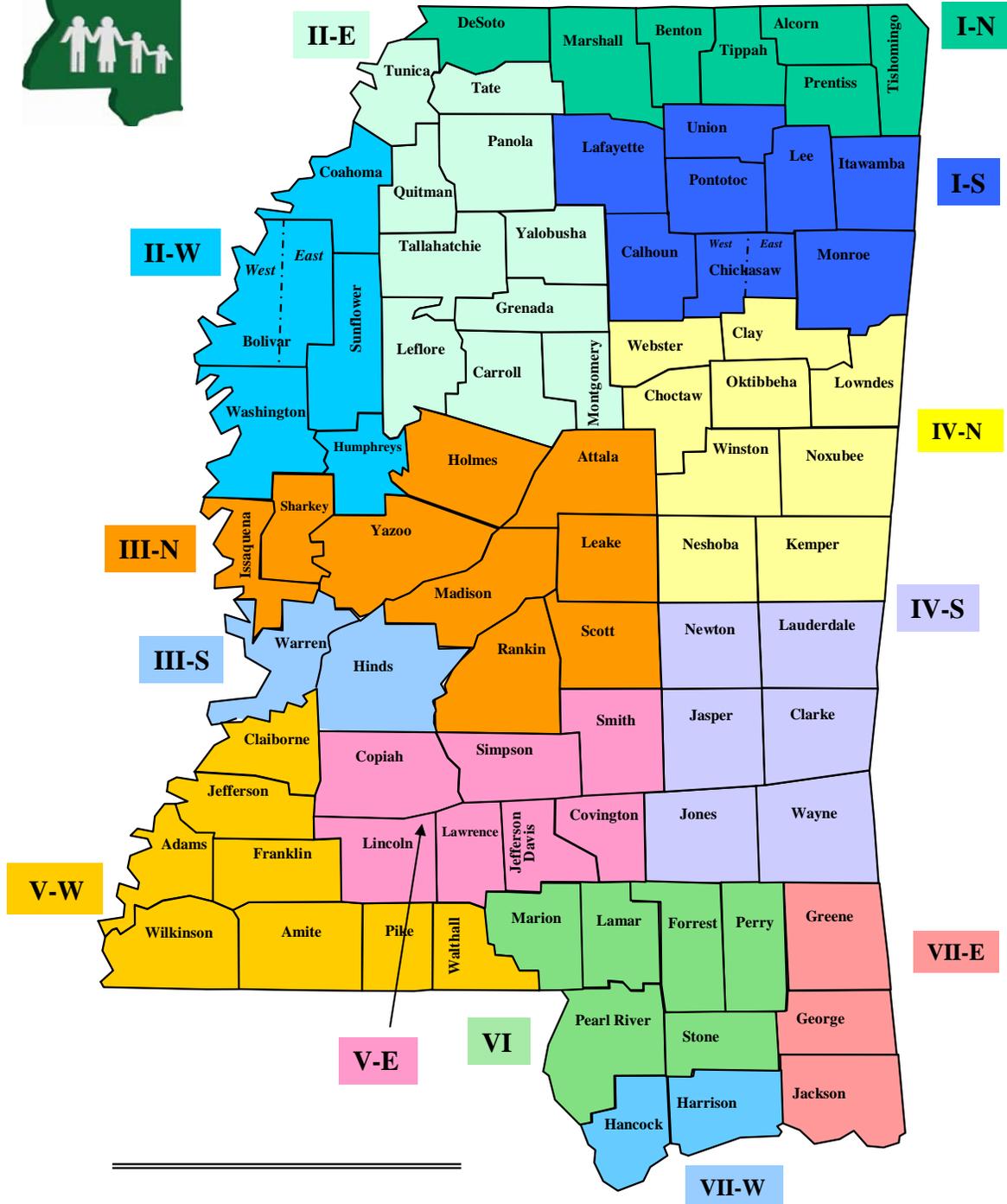
Office of Professional Development:



D. Thirteen Regions Map



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E. Child and Families Services Plan (CFSP) Progress

DFCS continues to hire qualified social workers and supervisors to better serve the children of Mississippi as well as to meet specific lawsuit Settlement requirements regarding acceptable workloads and number of persons a supervisor can supervise. Additional PINs have been provided by the Mississippi Legislature, as well as additional funding of those positions. As of 2013, DFCS is becoming fully staffed in most of the counties, including the Coastal Counties and the largest metropolitan County, Hinds.

Since the current CFSP will expire in 2014, a 5-Year Strategic Planning Conference was held February 12, 2013, with approximately 125 stakeholders and DFCS Senior Management attending. Track-One involved workgroups which developed the basis of the next 5-Year Strategic Plan with goals and action plans. Track-Two involved stakeholders who are required to respond to Requests for Proposals and be awarded a performance-based contract in order to provide emergency shelters, regular group homes or therapeutic homes for children in care. The 2015-2019 Plan will continue to be developed with the assistance of stakeholders through various stakeholder meetings, i.e. Regional Implementation Team Meetings, Citizens Review Panels, Service Provider Contractors meetings and trainings, as well as other collaborations to develop additional resources in the State to meet the needs of the children in care.

DFCS implemented several additional case review practices following the May 2010 Child and Family Services Review (CFSR), which uniquely prepare staff to not only learn what the Child and Family Services Review will involve when scheduled, but assists the staff in learning how to prepare case records which include all the documents and documentation reviewers will expect to find. The Foster Care Review of every child's case at six month intervals is one of the reviews. A second review is conducted by the Continuous Quality Improvement Unit at regular intervals outlined by the Mississippi Child Welfare Practice Model. A third review is conducted by the Federal Monitor for the *Olivia Y.* Modified Settlement Agreement and Reform Plan ("MSA") and includes participation from DFCS staff. A fourth type of review has been implemented in the Regions, peer-to-peer reviews, which is instructive for the staff.

F. Mississippi Settlement Agreement and Reform Plan

In July 2012, all *Olivia Y.* parties entered into a Modified Settlement Agreement and Reform Plan ("MSA"), which superseded the initial Settlement Agreement and Reform Plan. The filing of the MSA on July 6, 2012, constituted the start of Implementation Period 3 (a one-year period). The parties will negotiate an implementation plan for each following year until substantial compliance with the MSA requirements is reached (by 2016, per the terms of the MSA). DFCS' progress is monitored by a federal Court Monitor, Grace Lopes, and her staff, and by Judge Tom S. Lee, United States District Court, Southern District of the State of Mississippi, through quarterly telephonic hearings and biannual in-court hearings. Implementation Period 3 requirements include both administrative tasks (such as workforce development, utilization of performance-based contracts, and technological improvements) and case-practice tasks (such as ensuring foster children have visitation with their biological parents, and timely obtaining

medical assessments for children entering custody). The complete text of the Modified Settlement Agreement for Period 3 Implementation Plan is available at:

http://www.mdhs.state.ms.us/pdfs/fcs_oliviavsbarbour/fcs_msa120706.pdf.

II. DESCRIPTION OF THE STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

A. Foster Care Services and Kinship Care Goals from Child and Family Services Plan

Goals:

- To provide a safe environment for the well-being of foster children;
- To maintain a positive connection between children and their families and communities;
- To achieve permanent plans for children in a timely manner; and
- To empower kinship homes to provide safe and appropriate care for children.

Progress on Established Goals:

- Policy related to the licensure of relative and non-relative resource homes was revised and released.
- Diligent Recruitment grant activities rolled out in Regions IV-N and V-W. Regional recruitment teams were established in each region, training was provided, and written plans approved.
- Permanency Competency curriculum was trained in seven Practice Model regions.
- State Office adoption staff retrained Resource Supervisors and Resource Adoption Staff on the Adoption Competency Curriculum.
- The Foster Care Unit was created in State Office and staff hired to monitor and track expedited relative placements. A protocol and a report were developed to help state office staff, regional directors and resource supervisors with this task.
- The state was not successful in securing grant funding to implement the Kinship Navigator program.
- Gary Mallon, from National Resource Center for Permanency and Family Connections provided Training and Technical Assistance to Mississippi regarding the development and implementation of a Kinship Care program.
- Mississippi PATH, resource parent curriculum, was revised and released. Expanded and new topics include characteristics of successful resource parents, shared parenting, grief and loss, trauma informed care, cultural diversity, medications, and discipline.

Adoption and Foster Care Analysis Reporting System (AFCARS)

For FFY 2012, (October 1, 2011 - September 30, 2012) the State failed AFCARS Foster Care element #57 (date of discharge transaction date/timeliness) at 13.79%. In 2012, this failure is being assessed and steps to improve have been determined.

Termination of Parental Rights (TPR)

During FFY 2012, (October 1, 2011 - September 30, 2012) there were 437 TPR requests and 351 TPR's finalized by the Attorney General's Office.

B. Therapeutic Services for Children

Therapeutic providers are dually licensed by DFCS and the Mississippi Department of Mental Health (MDMH). Therapeutic services provide specialized care for children who need more structure and intervention than a resource home can provide. A referral for therapeutic services must include a psychological evaluation of the child that recommends a therapeutic setting. Placement is intended to be time-limited and treatment-focused to help the child transition to a less restrictive setting in the community.

Therapeutic services include: individual, family and group counseling, recreational therapy, educational services, medical and psychiatric services, transitional living and life skills training for older youth, family focused reunification services and a closely supervised, structured residence.

DFCS and the Division of Medicaid (DOM) continue to collaborate around mutual areas of interest. DOM's waiver program, MYPAC, provides intensive in-home services to children at imminent risk of placement in an acute treatment facility. MYPAC serves a number of children in foster care. DFCS continues to work with MYPAC to help more foster children access MYPAC services by DFCS staff in order to keep foster children out of acute care.

The cases of children who require even more intensive services and acute care are presented to the State Level Case Review Board, a collaboration of the Department of Mental Health, the Division of Medicaid, the Department of Education, and the Department of Human Services, for recommendations for treatment and/or placement. Coordinated by the Department of Mental Health, the Review Board meets monthly to review the child's history and current status. Effort is made to involve the parents in the meeting. If parents are unable to attend, they can participate via telephone. Bringing together the expertise and resources of four major state agencies in this way improves services for children and families in our state. In FFY 2012, the State Level Case Review Board reviewed seven (7) cases, four (4) of which were DHS referrals, three (3) were non-DHS referrals, and provided follow-up services on five (5) cases.

C. Harden House Adoption/Foster Care Program

Harden House Adoption/Foster Care Program is a multi-faceted continuum of care division of Southern Christian Services for Children and Youth, Inc. It is comprised of subprograms: Harden House Adoption Program, Harden House Therapeutic Foster Care Program, Partners in Permanency Program and Respite Services. This division provides recruitment of adoption resource families, specialized training of potential adoptive parents, placement of children with special needs from Mississippi's foster care system and interstate placements, post-placement supervision and post adoption services after finalization.

D. Licensure

The state office licensure staff is responsible for licensing and monitoring residential child care agencies as well as child-placing agencies in the state. New licensure standards went into effect July 1, 2012.

The DFCS Licensure Unit continues to perform licensure investigations following Abuse/Neglect/Exploitation (ANE) investigations in group homes, therapeutic group home or therapeutic resource homes. Additional licensure staff has been requested to assist with this function.

The DFCS Licensure Unit develops and revises licensure standards for Residential Child Caring and Child Placing Agencies. As of September 30, 2012, there were twenty-eight (28) Licensed Child-Placing Agencies which includes twenty (20) adoption agencies, six (6) agencies that provide therapeutic foster homes and two (2) agencies that provide regular foster homes. There were fifty-four (54) Residential Child-Caring Facilities, which includes one (1) maternity home and eight (8) shelters, twenty-seven (27) therapeutic group homes, and twenty-six (26) regular group homes. In FFY 2012, a total of five (5) agencies closed: three (3) group homes, one (1) shelter, and one (1) adoption agency. One (1) Residential Child Caring Agency was closed due to non-compliance with licensure standards. In FFY 2012, there were 270 therapeutic foster homes that are licensed to foster and/or adopt. A total of seventy-eight (78) therapeutic foster homes were closed.

E. The Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children

The Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC) is administered by DFCS. The compact has been approved by all fifty states, the District of Columbia, and the U. S. Virgin Islands. This agreement provides out-of-state placement and supervision of dependent children. Its major purpose is to protect children from being placed in dangerous or inadequate situations across state lines. All requests for domestic and international placement of children for adoption are cleared through this unit. Referrals for placement out-of-state are made from the local offices to the state office, where the referral is assessed for completeness before forwarding to the other state. Requests from other states for placement in Mississippi are also received in the state office and forwarded to the county for action. The local worker evaluates the home for appropriateness and safety and provides a home study with their findings. Supervision of the placement is provided by a local worker and progress reports are forwarded to the sending state.

The ICPC assures the safety of children being placed across state lines, both those going out of state as well as those coming into the state. The ICPC provides out-of-state placement and supervision of dependent children.

During FFY 2012, there were 1523 ICPC cases handled either for placement of children from other states into Mississippi or placement of Mississippi children in other states with relatives. This number includes closures, approvals, Regulation 7 Priority Placements (expedited referrals that must be completed in 20 workdays), disruptions and residential treatment facility

placements. During FFY 2012, 480 ICPC adoption cases were handled. There were 127 international adoptions processed for adoptive purposes. During FFY 2012, ICPC processed a total of 2003 cases. The international cases are broken down as follows:

- Albania=9
- China=51
- Ukraine=12
- Nepal=13
- Russia=6
- Korea=13
- Taiwan=12
- Guatemala=6
- Ethiopia=5

* Mississippi only approves the home studies going to USCIS. USCIS determines how many children are allowed to be placed in the home. All other services were handled through immigration office. As of December 1, 2012, Mississippi ICPC no longer process international adoption requests.

Goals for Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC):

- Secure a PIN to assist with caseload, mail and other clerical duties.
- Continue to work on MACWIS modifications to improve ICPC processing (i.e. System alerts to notify of past due home studies and a more efficient tracking system to compile all cases processed);
- Conduct regional training for ICPC.
- Secure more space for storing PDF files. ICPC will be able to scan and store more files.
- Improving working relationship with county judges through Court Improvement Program.
- Encourage judges to attend the ICPC National Training Conference. During FFY 2011, three county judges attended ICPC National Training Conference.
- Increase ICPC staff participation in additional professional development training.
- Established specific contacts in county offices for submission of referrals to improve processing time.
- Obtain ICPC desk reference material for distribution to county offices.
- Improved data collection process through Excel.

F. Unaccompanied Refugee Program

The Unaccompanied Refugee Program provides services to refugee children who are eligible for resettlement in the United States, but do not have a parent or a relative available and committed to providing long-term care. Upon arrival in the United States, these children receive foster care services and benefits. At the beginning of SFY 2012, there were approximately 35 Unaccompanied Refugee Minors in Mississippi with 30 remaining at the end of the fiscal year.

The State of Mississippi is one of only ten core sites around the United States which resettles URM youth. Services are provided through a contract with 100 % Federal funds.

III. DESCRIPTION OF PROMOTING SAFE AND STABLE FAMILIES SERVICES

A. Comprehensive Family Support Services Program (CFSSP) (Formally Family Preservation Services (FPS))

The Family Preservation Program was renamed to provide both Family Preservation Services and Family Reunification Services. The Comprehensive Family Support Services Program (CFSSP) delivers an array of comprehensive, intensive treatment and wrap-around services to children and families in the service caseload of the Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS), Division of Family and Children's Services (DFCS). Service delivery occurs primarily in the family home setting or other locations based on the identified needs of the children and families. Examples may include, but are not limited to: relative home, foster home, and school setting.

Program Overview

The Comprehensive Family Support Services Program (CFSSP) provides Family Preservation and Family Reunification services and sets forth conditions under which children may be safely maintained or safely returned to their homes. Safety for these children and youth is paramount.

The primary goals are two-fold: 1) To serve as an alternative to the unnecessary placement of children in out of home care; and 2) To promote timely Reunification for children who have been removed from their homes. Families whose children are at imminent risk of placement or children who have been recently removed and placed outside of their home should receive these services. CFSSP provides Family Preservation and Reunification services that are accessible, effective and culturally appropriate. These services build on existing strengths and identify individualized needs of the client and families. Services are family-driven and youth-guided, planned around the availability and schedule of the family, and will primarily be provided in the home.

Explanation of Services

The Program provides short-term (4 to 8 weeks) intensive in-home services to serve as an alternative to the unnecessary placement of children in out-of-home care (Family Preservation). It provides intensive in-home services (12 to 16 weeks) that may include preparation, supervised visitation, transitional and reunification services to promote timely reunification for children who been removed from their homes (Family Reunification). Mississippi Children's Home Society (MCHS), the Provider of this service offers family support services to further strengthen and support the families served through both Family Preservation and Family Reunification.

Each team, which includes a Therapist and Case Manager, have a caseload of no more than six (6) cases. Based on these caseloads, these teams are available and may serve a total of fifty-six (56) to eighty-four (84) cases statewide on any given day. The number of cases served by Mississippi Children's Home Services (MCHS) is dependent on the cases referred from

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Submitted: June 30, 2013

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Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS), Division of Family and Children's Services (DFCS) and assigned to MCHS.

The primary criteria for a referral to the CFSSP is a family where the child(ren) or youth served by MDHS are at imminent risk for removal from the home for a placement in a standard or more restrictive foster care placement, Family Preservation, or the child(ren) must have been removed from their home for a period up to six months but not to exceed eight months with the goal of timely reunification, (Family Reunification).

- Referral Criteria includes:
 - All referrals must be submitted by MDHS/DFCS workers, approved by the MDHS CFSSP Program Coordinator, and assigned to the MCHS CFSSP Supervisors.
 - The child or youth must be between the ages of birth to twenty-one (21) and served by MDHS/DFCS.
 - The child/youth must be at risk of removal from the home setting for a placement in a standard or more restrictive foster care placement (family preservation).
 - The child(ren) must have been recently removed from their home for a period not to exceed eight months with the goal of timely reunification (Family Reunification).
 - Families must voluntarily agree to participate in the program.

- Description of Services:
 - Once the referral is accepted, MCHS will coordinate with the local MDHS staff and contact the family within twenty-four (24) hours.
 - A Crisis and Safety Plan will be developed with the family and updated as needed and will include crisis intervention, crisis management and debriefing. MCHS will present the Crisis and Safety Plan developed with the family to the MDHS Caseworker to collaboratively integrate with the MDHS Safety Plan.
 - Teams will be available to the families 24/7 for crisis intervention services once admitted into program.
 - Intake assessments will be provided utilizing the North Carolina Family Assessment Scale (NCFAS) to determine family functioning and will be repeated at discharge to determine outcomes. The results of the assessments will be included in the quarterly and annual reports.
 - Assessment tools will be available to the CFSSP Therapist and will be completed with the family based on individualized needs.
 - Services will be provided by a team to include a Master's level therapist and a Bachelor's level case manager. The teams are supervised by a Master's level supervisor.
 - A Family Team Meeting (FTM) will be held with the MDHS county staff, CFSSP staff, the family and additional family supports to collaborate with MDHS on the

- development and/or update of the Individualized Service Plan (ISP), building on the strengths and the individualized needs of the client and family.
- MCHS will develop an ISP with the family as part of the CFSSP intake and initial assessment. This initial plan will be presented to MDHS county staff during Family Team Meetings (FTM) to achieve a collaborative ISP. MDHS will be responsible for entering the documentation of the collaborative ISP in Mississippi Automated Child Welfare Information System (MACWIS).
 - Services provided must address the cause(s) for the child entering custody or reasons the child is at risk for an out-of-home placement. CFSSP services must be individualized and guided by the goals and activities of the ISP.
 - The services provided by the team include, but are not limited to:
 - The Therapist will provide therapeutic services based on assessed needs (i.e., assessments, brief or targeted therapy, trauma informed care, advocacy, behavior management and intervention, psycho-education, individualized parenting, skill building, etc.)
 - The Case Manager will provide case management services (i.e., referrals for basic needs including health and developmental services, access to formal and informal resources, linkages to community services and activities, transportation, life skills, etc.)
 - Flex funds will be available per family to assist with immediate and concrete needs when other funding sources are not available and to utilize non-traditional services as appropriate to the case.
 - Services will be family-driven and youth-guided. Services will be provided around the availability and schedule of the family and will primarily be provided in the home.
 - Families will have the opportunity to participate in evaluation of the program efficacy and consumer satisfaction through surveys and their input will be utilized to continuously improve services.
 - Twice a month conference calls will occur to review cases with CFSSP State Coordinator, MDHS County Case Workers, CFSSP Therapist and Case Manager, and CFSSP Supervisors to determine progress toward the goals and objectives of the ISP and for on-going case planning to address continuing priorities and needs. At this time, decisions will be made by the CFSSP State Coordinator regarding continuing services, extensions or case closures (terminate services).
 - Extensions may be requested through the CFSSP State Coordinator at least fourteen (14) days prior to the planned discharge date if the extension would allow the family to reach additional goals or achieve positive outcomes prior to discharge.
 - MCHS will obtain Case Management certification from the Mississippi Department of Mental Health, at which time all case managers will be trained and certified as case managers.

North Carolina Family Assessment Scale (NCFAS):

An intake and discharge assessment will be provided utilizing the North Carolina Family Assessment Scale (NCFAS or NCFAS-R) to determine family functioning and individualized needs. The NCFAS is used for Family Preservation cases and the NCFAS–R is used on Reunification cases. The NCFAS is administered no later than 5 business days from admission and would also be completed 24 hours prior to discharge to determine outcomes. NCFAS scores should be determined jointly by the team with the therapist entering results into the NCFAS field in TIER. (TIER stands for Totally Integrated Electronic Record, records client data.) For cases that are closing due to inability to contact or meet with the family, within the first five business days, with the agreement and approval of MDHS, a NCFAS will not be required or entered in TIER.

Other Assessments:

Additional assessments will be completed with the family based on identified needs during the first 2 weeks of service and as needed during the remainder of the service period. Each team is provided multiple and various instruments available for more in depth assessments based on individualized needs of the family. Assessments include, but are not limited to: Safety Checklist, CASA Family Assessment, Child Behavioral Checklist, Child Adolescent Family Assessment Scale (CAFAS), Depression Scale for Children, Measures of Change including outcome rating scale and session rating scales; Multidimensional Anger Inventory, and Beck Scales for Suicide, Hopelessness, Anxiety and Depression. **Measures of Change including outcome rating scale and session rating scales will no longer be optional but expected to be implemented in standard daily practice.** All assessments completed are documented in an Assessment Summary Note in TIER by the therapist or case manager.

Surveys:

At intake and discharge, the client will be provided a survey to rate the referral process (intake) and service delivery (discharge). These surveys will be delivered by a team member or mailed to the client. There will be a self-addressed stamped envelope that is addressed to the MDHS State Program Coordinator for that region. The client will be asked to fill out the survey and mail the survey at their convenience or the worker may take the sealed survey and mail on the client's behalf. These surveys are confidential, anonymous, and voluntary. In addition, a worker survey is provided for DFCS county staff to rate the overall satisfaction with the CFSSP services at discharge. These surveys may be mailed directly to the CFSSP State Program Coordinator for that region.

Outcome Goals

Preservation

Annually, at least eighty percent of the identified children in the Family Preservation cases at the time of discharge, will have been safely maintained in the same home as the referral or with a family member/relative; therefore, preventing the child/children from entering the MDHS foster care system.

Reunification

Annually, at least eighty percent of the identified children in the Reunification cases at the time of discharge, where the child was actually placed back in the home (by the court or MDHS) during services, will have been safely maintained with family, preventing the child/children from re-entering foster care.

NCFAS Scores, Preservation

Annually, aggregate NCFAS scores for family preservation cases will reflect improvement in the five areas of family functioning: Environmental, Parental Capabilities, Family Interactions, Family Safety, and Child Well-being.

NCFAS Scores, Reunification

Annually, aggregate NCFAS scores for reunification cases will reflect improvement in the five areas of family functioning including the additional areas of Caregiver/Child Ambivalence and Readiness for Reunification.

Family Surveys

Based on the Family Surveys at discharge, eighty percent of families served will indicate satisfaction with Family Preservation or Reunification services.

Comprehensive Family Support Services Program Yearly Report October 1, 2011-September 30, 2012

Data on Families -

- **Total Number of Children Served:** **1134**
(Includes 111 children which were carried over from last contract)
- **Total Number of Families Served:** **402**
(Includes 41 families which were carried over from last contract)

Type of Referrals –

- **Family Preservation** **289**
 - Abuse 76
 - Neglect: 200
 - Other: 13
- **Reunification:** **113**
 - Abuse: 47
 - Neglect: 52
 - Other: 14

Placement –

- Number of Children who were in an Out-of-Home Placement 169

- (at the time of referral)
- Number of Families with Children in an Out-of-Home Placement (at the time of referral) 77
- Number of Children Who Remained in Out-of-Home Placement 152
- Number of Families with Children Who Remained in Out-of-Home Placement 74
- Number of Families Which Were Reunified: 31
- Number of Children Re-Unified: 70

Ongoing Service Numbers –

- Number of Children Served Ongoing: 1134
- Number of Children Remaining Safely: 1005
- Number of Families Served Ongoing: 402
- Number of Families Remaining Intact: 317

Percentage of Children Who Remained Safely - 88.7%
Percentage of Families Remaining Intact - 78.9%

B. Adoption Services

Resource workers and their supervisors in each of the state’s thirteen (13) regions are responsible for the recruitment, pre-service training, in-service training and licensing of resource homes. They are also responsible for preparing children for adoption, matching children with their adoptive families and supervising the placement.

During FFY 2012, the Adoption Unit placed 327 children into adoptive homes. There were 490 children in the custody of the Department who were freed for adoption with a plan of adoption effective Sept. 2012. In FFY 2012, there were 2,449 children receiving adoption assistance benefits, 1,475 receiving IV-E/Federal funded benefits and 974 CWS/State funded benefits.

During FFY 2012 all state current adoption staff and one private agency adoption staff were trained in the Adoption Competency Curriculum (ACC). However, additional adoption staff has been added to the agency and were not yet trained by the end of FFY 2012. During 2013 the Professional Development Unit will be adding the Adoption Competency Curriculum as part of the new training being developed for specialized positions within the agency. New adoption specialists who have not yet been trained will be able to acquire this training and ACC will then be offered quarterly to any staff that needs to participate.

As a direct result of the ACC training, the Adoption Specialists now complete Comprehensive Child Assessments for every child being adopted. The basic information for this assessment is pulled from the Comprehensive Family Assessments being completed by the foster care workers. The Adoption Specialists then gather all additional information during the preparation and assessment for adoption of each child.

The Competent Permanency Planning curriculum was developed during FFY 2011. During FFY 2012 this training was added to the statewide training schedule as an ongoing training with continuing educational hours for all DFCS staff.

The recruitment, training and licensing requirements for foster and adoptive parents are the same because many foster parents adopt their foster children. When foster parents choose to adopt, an adoption addendum which addresses child-specific adoption issues is added to the initial resource home study which was completed by a Licensure Specialist. Families who want to adopt only are licensed as resource families, but are not required to foster children prior to TPR. The Adoption Specialist completes the initial adoption home studies for these families, then matches and supervises children placed in those homes through the finalization of the adoption.

In September 2010, Mississippi was awarded one of seven discretionary grants for the Diligent Recruitment of Families for Children in the Foster Care System by the Children's Bureau. This grant is awarded as a cooperative agreement between the Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF), the Children's Bureau (CB), and the Mississippi Department of Human Services.

Mississippi is using these grant funds to develop and implement a diligent recruitment program to identify, prepare, and support resource families for children in the state's foster care system. Activities are focused on locating families who will serve as foster and adoptive families for children who are the most difficult to place:

- Large sibling groups;
- Sexually abused children;;
- Children who act out sexually or are sexually active;
- Pregnant girls who plan to keep the baby in the foster home;
- Children with severe behavioral problems;
- Teenagers of both genders; and
- Children with physical (including medically fragile), emotional or intellectual challenges.

The diligent recruitment initiative has been linked to major reforms in the State that include implementing a new practice model, a Continuous Quality Improvement Plan and policy revisions.

In addition to the targeted recruitment being conducted as part of the diligent recruitment initiative, the adoption specialists have been taught to mine the cases of youth who are free for adoption in order to find relatives and other individuals who can be re-connected to the youth. Some of these re-connections have developed into permanent families for the youth.

A teen-focused adoption recruiter was added to the adoption unit in FFY 2011. This recruiter, as well as 2 Wendy's Wonderful Kids recruiter works individually with 7-9 youth at a time. The teen-focused recruiter is assigned youth who are resistant to adoption in order to engage them in

their permanent plan and seek a permanent family. During FFY 2012, 8 of the 15 youth assigned to this recruiter resulted in finalized adoptions.

DFCS also teams with other child placing agencies in the Adoption Consortium. The Adoption Consortium is a group representing all licensed child-placing agencies in the state. It meets semi-monthly at a different host agency to discuss issues of mutual concern. The Consortium produces collaborative adoption events, including recruitment efforts for waiting children.

Adopting families are given information about adoption assistance, which may include monthly financial assistance, continued Medicaid coverage for the child, payment of attorney's fees, and a one-time adoption incentive payment.

Families are also informed of post-adoption services, including support groups, respite care and intensive in-home services to prevent disruptions. Post-adoption services are provided through a contract with Southern Christian Services, Inc.

Adoption Goals from Child and Family Services Plan:

- Ensure a sufficient number of available adoptive families for children awaiting adoption.
- Provide Pre-Adoption Services to prepare children, birth parents and prospective adoptive parents for adoption.
- Identify adoptive families who can meet the needs of waiting children and facilitate timely placements.
- Provide Post-Adoption Services to promote child and adult well-being and family functioning and stability.
- Implement a Teen Adoption Initiative in order to provide permanent adoptive placements for older special needs children in state custody.

Progress on Established Goals:

- In FFY 2012, 417 adoptions were finalized.
- Protocol for Regional and State-Level Placement Committee Meetings has been revised based on the Adoption Competency Curriculum. State level Placement Committee Meetings are held twice per year in March and September. Each region has developed a schedule for monthly regional placement committee meetings as well as multi-regional quarterly meetings. Comprehensive Child Assessments are provided to all placement committee members prior to the meeting so each has an opportunity to review current home studies in order to be prepared to present families for the children needing placement.
- The Teen-Focused Recruiter facilitated finalized adoptions of 8 youth who had been resistant to adoption.
- Hosted an Adoption Celebration Picnic in conjunction with various community partners including Southern Christian Services for Children & Youth/Harden House and Youth

Villages. The event held in November at the Agriculture Center/Museum was attended by approximately 450 people.

C. Changes in Plan

The Intensive In-Home/Reunification program no longer exists. However, CFSSP does Reunification Services for families with children who have not been out of the home longer than 8 months. The goal is to promote timely Reunification for children who have been removed from their homes. The service provides intensive in-home services for 12 to 16 weeks that may include preparation, supervised visitation, transitional and reunification services. The outcomes for the program are that annually at least eighty percent of the identified children in the Reunification cases at the time of discharge, where the child was actually placed back in the home (by the court or MDHS) during services, remain safely maintained with family, preventing the child/children from re-entering foster care.

IV. COLLABORATIONS/INITIATIVES

Collaborations

A. Collaboration with Other Agencies

Collaboration continues with other agencies through State FY 2012 Interagency Memorandum of Agreement between the Division of Medicaid.

Mississippi Interagency Coordinating Council for Children and Youth (ICCCY)

DFCS participates in the Mississippi Interagency Coordinating Council for Children and Youth (ICCCY) and the Interagency Systems of Care Council (ISOC). The ICCCY is authorized by 2012 legislation and is comprised of the Executive leaders of the state agencies for Education, Human Services, Mental Health, Public Health, and Rehabilitation. The purpose of this legislation is to provide for the development, implementation and oversight of a coordinated interagency system of necessary services and care for children and youth, called the Mississippi Statewide System of Care, up to age twenty-one (21) with serious emotional/behavioral disorders including, but not limited to, conduct disorders, or mental illness who require services from multiple services and multiple programs system, i.e. prevention services to successfully provide services in their community. These services are child centered, family focused, family driven and youth guided, community based, culturally competent and shall provide for human rights protection and advocacy, nondiscrimination in access to services. It is a comprehensive array of services supported by best practices and/or evidence-based practices, individualized service planning that uses a strength-based, wraparound process, services in the least restrictive environment, family participation in all aspects of planning, service delivery and evaluation and integrated services with coordinated planning across child-serving agencies. The services include, but not limited to the following: comprehensive crisis and emergency response services; intensive case management; day treatment; alcohol and drug abuse group services for youth; individual, group and family therapy; respite services; supported employment services for youth; family education and support and family partners; youth development and support and youth

partners; positive behavioral supports (PBIS) in schools; transition-age supported and independent living services; and vocational/technical education services for youth.

Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP)

The DFCS Resource Development Director serves on the Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) for the State Department of Education. Other members of SEAP include parents of children with disabilities (ages birth through 21); individuals with disabilities; teachers; representatives of institutions of higher education that prepare special education and related services personnel; State and local education officials, including officials who carry out activities under subtitle B of title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.); administrators of programs for children with disabilities; representatives of other State agencies involved in the financing or delivery of related services to children with disabilities; representatives of private schools and public charter schools; not less than 1 representative of a vocational, community, or business organization concerned with the provision of transition services to children with disabilities; a representative from the State child welfare agency responsible for foster care; and representatives from the State juvenile and adult corrections agencies. The mission of the Special Education Advisory Panel is to promote the education of children and youth with disabilities. The panel provides advice and guidance to the Mississippi Department of Education, Office of Special Education, regarding the provision of education and related services of children and youth with disabilities in local educational agencies.

Arc of Mississippi

The DFCS Prevention Unit Special Projects Officer who coordinates the CBCAP grant presently serves on the Board of Directors for the Arc of Mississippi. The Arc of Mississippi was founded in 1961 and is an affiliate of The Arc of the United States, the world's largest grassroots advocacy organization for citizens of all ages with cognitive, intellectual, and developmental disabilities, and their families. The Arc is a nationally recognized organization with 140,000 members who are affiliated through approximately 750 state and local chapters across the nation. The Arc of Mississippi works to include all children and adults with cognitive, intellectual, and developmental disabilities in every community. They focus on Abilities, Respect, Choice for all and encourage active citizenship and inclusion in every community. Other members of the Board of Directors include parents of children with disabilities, individuals with disabilities; representatives of other State agencies involved in the financing or delivery of related services to children and adults with disabilities and their families.

B. Collaboration with Hardin House Adoption/Foster Care Program

Harden House Adoption/Foster Care Program is a multi-faceted continuum of care division of Southern Christian Services for Children and Youth, Inc. It is comprised of subprograms: Harden House Adoption Program, Harden House Therapeutic Foster Care Program, Partners in Permanency Program and Respite Services. This division provides recruitment of adoption resource families, specialized training of potential adoptive parents, placement of children with special needs from Mississippi's foster care system and interstate placements, post-placement supervision and post adoption services after finalization.

C. Collaboration with Tribes in Mississippi: Representatives from the Tribes in Mississippi participated in the Child and Families Services Plan at a Five Year Strategic Planning Conference in February 2009 and outlined collaborative efforts for the future. Representatives also participated in the Child and Families Services Review training for review of case records in July 2009. The Tribe's Social Services Director and four other senior staff participated in the CFSR interview in May 2010. Further, tribal representatives routinely work with the Regional DFCS to serve children and families with needs who reside on tribal land or Native Americans residing in the surrounding areas. In June 2012, DFCS forwarded the Annual Progress Services Report via email to the Choctaw Nation and requested the Tribe to forward their APSR as soon as it is available.

D. Collaboration with The Mississippi Emergency Management Plan: Attachment to Emergency Support Function #6 of the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan was completed on March 27, 2009 and approved by the Administration for Children and Families Office of Refugees Resettlement (ACFORR).

E. Collaboration through a Memorandum of Understanding was entered into on August 13, 2009 between DFCS and the Mexican Consulate for cooperation in providing services to children in the United States who are Mexican citizens.

F. Collaboration with stakeholders, agencies, courts, health care providers and others in the Child and Family Services Plan. In February, 2013, a Child and Family Services Plan (5-Year Strategic Planning) Conference was held with approximately 125 participants including stakeholders and DFCS Senior Management attending. Workgroups outlined the basis of the 5-Year Strategic Plan and goals were set.

G. Collaboration through an Interagency Agreement between the Division of Medicaid and the Mississippi Department of Human Services, dated January 24, 2011 for Provision of Medical Assistance for Refugees in Mississippi.

H. Collaboration with stakeholders, agencies, courts, health care providers and others in the Child and Family Services Review May 17-21, 2010. (CFSR) was conducted on site at the DFCS State Office and in Hinds, DeSoto and Lauderdale Counties in Mississippi. A large group of stakeholders participated in the CFSR: Associate Justice of the Mississippi Supreme Court, Youth Court judges, guardians *ad litem*, Attorney General's staff, foster parents, adoptive parents, representatives from Medicaid, Youth Services, Department of Health, Department of Mental Health, Department of Education, Tribal representatives, Administrative Office of Courts representatives, Citizens Review Panel representatives, children and youth in care, providers of services and consultants.

I. Collaboration with stakeholders, agencies, courts, health care providers and others in the Child and Family Services Review/Program Improvement Plan (PIP): As a result of the findings from the CFSR, DFCS developed a PIP for the Areas Needing Improvement. DFCS

invited stakeholders who participated in the Child and Family Services Plan Workshop and the CFSR on-site reviews to continue to work with DFCS throughout the achievement of the PIP as well as invite other stakeholders to participate. The PIP was submitted February 2011 and finalized April 27, 2011 with the following strategies:

Six Primary Strategies

***(Practice Model Implementation Regions are I-S, II-W, V-W, IV-N, I-N, IV-S, and III-S)**

Primary Strategy I: Strengthen Safety and Assurance and Risk Management in the first seven Practice Model implementation Regions of the State.

Primary Strategy II: Improve Strengths and Needs Assessments of Children, Parents, and Resource Parents and provide matching services to meet the needs.

Primary Strategy III: Strengthen Child Welfare Practice through Family Team Meetings (FTM).

Primary Strategy IV: Strengthen permanency and stability for children in their living situations.

Primary Strategy V: Strengthening Monitoring and Oversight through Continuous Quality Improvement process.

Primary Strategy VI: Strengthen Court Processes with collaboration and/or cross-training between Mississippi Supreme Court, Administrative Office of the Courts' Court Improvement Program, Mississippi's Commission on Children's Justice, Youth Court personnel, Tribes, and DFCS Staff to improve permanency outcomes.

From September 2011 to April 2013, stakeholders continued to assist Mississippi in achieving the Program Improvement Plan by participating in Regional Legal Stakeholders for Permanency for Children meetings as each Region rolled out the Practice Model, participating in Multidisciplinary Team meetings, and serving on Practice Model Regional Implementation Teams.

As of April 2013, the PIP eighth and final quarter report was submitted showing progress has been made in all Six Strategies of the PIP. Mississippi is now in the non-overlapping year to meet the remaining data standards regarding CFSR Item 1: Timeliness of Initiating Investigations of Reports of Child Maltreatment; Item 10: Other Planned Permanency Living Arrangement, Item 19: Caseworker Visits with Child, and the National Standard, Placement Stability.

J. Memorandum of Understanding: Child Abuse on Keesler Air Force Base, Harrison and Jackson Counties, agreeing that any suspected cases of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or neglect of children may, when feasible, be jointly investigated, monitored and resolved. This MOU became effective March 2010 and remains in force for twelve months and shall be

renewed automatically for equal twelve-month periods, each and every year thereafter, unless any party gives written notice of intention not to renew prior to the expiration of the current effective period.

K. Division of Family and Children’s Services Collaboration with the Division of Early Childhood Care and Development (DECCD)

The Division of Early Childhood Care (DECCD) is within the Department of Human Services. DECCD is responsible for the administration of Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) which provides subsidized child care certificates to eligible families. DECCD administers the Quality Rating and Improvement System for childcare providers as well as the Child Care Resource and Referral Network. Through CCDF the Division offers a variety of training and technical assistance to child care programs. The training and technical assistance program is designed to evaluate the knowledge and a wide range of skills of child care professionals and offer them continuing education to increase the ability and skills of the child care professional workforce. It further supports quality throughout Mississippi’s child care system with a professional development that offers quality age-appropriate developmental activities in child care settings. DFCS collaborates with DECCD to provide child care certificates to families that are in need of child care to maintain stability as a family unit. There is also a move toward collaboration on providing quality early childhood education as a means of child abuse prevention.

L. Collaboration with the Courts:

- Significant collaboration with the Youth Courts and the Mississippi Supreme Court Administration Office of Courts (AOC) continues through collaboration with the Mississippi Commission on Children’s Justice, the Parent Representation Pilot Projects in Rankin, Harrison, Forrest and Adams counties and the Annual Judges and Referees Conference.
- The Mississippi Youth Court Information Delivery System (MYCIDS) has been made available, set up and trained statewide. One county out of 82 has not implemented MYCIDS.
- Collaboration between the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, the Choctaw Model Youth Court and the Attorney General’s Office at Choctaw occurred to produce the First and Second Annual Indian Child Welfare Act Conferences in 2011 and 2012 and to affect a Memorandum of Understanding on October 25, 2012 between the MBCI and DFCS. The Third Annual Indian Child Welfare Act Conference is scheduled for August 14-16, 2013.
- The Court Improvement Workgroup meets monthly to address legal issues for implementing the requirements of the Modified Settlement Agreement, to identify training for the judiciary, to develop plans and goals to affect outcomes through the Youth Court.
- Advanced Professional Development for Court Practice continues to be trained for new hires, as well as Advanced Professional Development for Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC), Title IV-E funding, and Uniform Rules of Youth Court

Practice (URYCP) and Advanced Professional Development: Disproportionality and Six Steps to Engaging Families.

Goals:

- Continue collaboration between the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, the Choctaw Model Youth Court and the Attorney General's Office at Choctaw to produce Annual Indian Child Welfare Act Conferences
- Continue collaboration with the Administrative Office of Courts to implement the Mississippi Youth Court Information Delivery System (MYCIDS) program for DFCS and Court information systems interface. An interface has not been achieved due to the antiquated MACWIS system. An assessment of MACWIS has been completed and recommendations made to install a new system which meets the needs of DFCS, including MYCIDS interface.
- Continue, in conjunction with the Mississippi Child Welfare Practice Model, Legal Stakeholders for Permanency for Children, as the last three Regions roll out the Practice Model. This conference brings judges, guardians *ad litem*, prosecutors, court administrators. These meetings will be scheduled for the Fall 2013. DFCS supervisors and field staff together to develop goals and plans for improving outcomes in areas needing improvement. The legal stakeholders are invited to become part of the Regional Implementation Teams to implement the Practice Model.
- Continue to work with the Uniform Rules of Youth Court Practice Task Force to revise and update rules as needed. The URYCP are located on the Mississippi Supreme Court website. Uniform youth court forms for orders and other documents are approved and hyperlinked to the Uniform Youth Court Rules of Practice. A request has been made to include standard orders for Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children in the next revision of the Rules.

http://courts.ms.gov/rules/msrulesofcourt/uniform_rules_yc_practice.pdf

- Uniform forms and orders are also available in MYCIDS for more efficient collaboration between the courts and DFCS.

Strategies:

- Request technical assistance from the National Child Welfare Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues, National Resource Center for Tribes, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, Choctaw Model Youth Court and Mississippi Administrative Office of Courts to sponsor the Annual Indian Child Welfare Act Conference
- Collaborate with Mississippi Administrative Office of Courts to provide training to the judiciary and DFCS staff.
- Continue collaboration with other agencies:
- Develop a written strategies plan to address identified issues:
 - Unlicensed Shelters
 - Courtroom Environment

- Number of children taken into custody
- Recruitment/Retention of Staff
- Timely Court Orders
- Timely Permanency Hearings
- Training for DFCS Staff
- Restructure of Hiring Processes
- Evaluation of TPR Process/TPR Remedial Plan; Timeliness of adoption
- Overdue TPR packets
- Agency Representation in Court
- Collaborate with Harrison, Hancock, Jackson and Hinds Counties to implement three broad strategies, goals and action steps:
 - Build credibility of DFCS staff to represent solid practice (within the context of the family-centered practice model) and to represent the agency’s position in court proceedings.
 - Identify common ground between the courts and the agency on how both can work together to achieve the outcomes that both deem desirable.
 - Address specific “procedural” issues that overlap with the agency and the court.

Court Improvement Workgroup/TPR Subcommittee

The court improvement work group meets monthly to identify the breakdowns/barriers between DFCS and the court system. Members of the group include:

- Mary Fuller, Chair-person and Attorney. Mary Fuller is the DFCS Director of Administration, teaches CLE seminars at Mississippi College School of Law for guardians *ad litem* recertification and juvenile defenders seminars; works with individual judges in the State to implement court improvement strategies, coordinates the production of professional training curricula and videos for court improvement practices for DFCS and the judiciary; and represents DFCS on the Planning Committee for the Annual Indian Child Welfare Indian Act Conference with the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians.
- Lyndsy Irwin, Secretary of CIP Workgroup and Attorney. Lyndsy Irwin works with the Mississippi Legislature as a liaison for DFCS; provides training in the DFCS Regions regarding the termination of parental rights protocol and procedures, maintains the 2012-2013 Performance Improvement Plan Matrix and Narrative, coordinates Risk Prevention Management compliance with Council on Accreditation Standards, and represents DFCS on the Planning Committee for the Annual Indian Child Welfare Indian Act Conference with the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians..
- Dennis Perkins, Administrative Office of Courts. Dennis Perkins manages the Court Improvement Program funding of training for DFCS staff and the judiciary; facilitates the production of professional training curricula and videos; facilitates providing keynote speakers for the Judges and Referees Annual Conference; and coordinates the Annual Indian Child Welfare Indian Act Conference in collaboration with National Resource Centers and other group as well as the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians.

- Earl Scales, Attorney General's Office. Earl Scales supervises representation for DFCS in Youth Court/Chancery Court cases; coordinates production of monthly termination of parental rights data regarding petitions filed, judgments received, pending cases and continued hearings.
- Patti Marshall, Attorney General's Office. Patti Marshall serves on many multidisciplinary groups related to improving child welfare, assists in identifying legal barriers to permanency for children and meets with Judges and Referees throughout the State to implement improvement in Youth Court practices and procedures.
- Alice Adair, Director of Foster Care Review for DFCS. Alice Adair provides data from the Foster Care Review to determine cases in which a petition has not been filed, nor exception noted, for child in care 12 months out of 22 months, overdue County Conferences and other data related to permanency goals.
- Ronnie Crawford, Consultant. Ronnie Crawford assists in interpreting data reports and identifying trends and finding solutions for reversing negative trends.
- Mary Ann Everett, Consultant. Mary Ann Everett joined the CIP Workgroup to assist in developing a Remedial TPR Plan to move children to permanency more efficiently to meet specific requirements of the *Olivia Y.* Modified Settlement Agreement.
- Margie Shelton, Adoption Unit Division Director. Margie Shelton works with the DFCS Adoption Unit to increase adoptions in a timely manner by working with several multidisciplinary groups to find permanent homes for children and assists in identifying barriers to permanency goals.
- Viedale Washington, Regional Director in Region II West. She directs and supervises the child welfare practice in five counties located in the northwest corner of Mississippi.
- Vannie Sturgis, TPR coordinator. Vannie Sturgis coordinates the DFCS weekly tracking report for TPRs with the Attorney General's Office monthly tracking report; posts both reports on the DFCS Connection available to all staff and notifies Regional Directors of the postings monthly; processes TPR packets received from the DFCS Counties and forwards to the Attorney General's Office for filing of a petition.
- Sabrea Smith, Program Administrator Senior, is part of the Adoption Unit and works with the counties to complete termination of parental rights packets and to promote adoption of legally freed for adoption children.
- Jamie McBride, Administrative Office of Courts. Jamie McBride coordinates developing, improving and maintaining the Mississippi Youth Court Information Delivery System (MYCIDS), which is now available in all counties in Mississippi with 81 counties participating in some phase of implementation i.e. training, start-up data entry, to efficient use of the program to report and track court data.

These workgroup members also comprise the TPR subcommittee, which studies the TPR process to identify breakdowns/barriers and develop solutions to make the TPR process more efficient. The Attorney General's Office produces a monthly tracking report, and the subcommittee reviews this report at each meeting. Vannie Sturgis also produces a weekly report that is also reviewed by the subcommittee.

The State Implementation Team for the *Olivia Y.* Modified Settlement Agreement reviews requirements and requests assistance in compliance with legal and judicial matters affecting completion of deliverables i.e. Remedial TPR Plan and Written Strategies with individual Judges/Referees.

Initiatives

A. Accreditation in Mississippi

As a requirement of the *Olivia Y. v. Barbour* lawsuit, Mississippi agreed to seek accreditation by the Council on Accreditation. The Council on Accreditation (COA) is the largest independent accrediting body for organizations that provide high-quality social and behavioral healthcare services to children, youth, seniors, and families in the United States and Canada, and partners with human service organizations worldwide to improve service delivery outcomes by developing, applying, and promoting accreditation standards. Accreditation is designed to be a framework within which an organization can measure a variety of its achievements, insure quality improvement of services across the state, and assure the safety, permanency, and well-being of all Mississippi's children.

DFCS continues to be actively involved in the five year accreditation process with the Council on Accreditation. During fiscal year 2012, COA has continued to provide ongoing technical assistance, materials and resources in DFCS' implementation of the identified performance standards and deliverables, including but not limited to, client improvements, policy and procedural issues, operational improvements and enhancements, and development of the Self Study.

Accreditation Preparation Reviews were held in all thirteen regions. These reviews clarify the COA accreditation process, determine current status of regional and county offices as related to the implementation of the applicable COA accreditation standards, assess how services are delivered at the regional and county level, and provide remedial recommendations in order to ensure the implementation of the applicable standards.

Mock Site Visits were held in two regions and at the state office. These reviews were conducted by actual COA Peer Review Teams to ensure an authentic site visit experience and provide technical assistance and feedback regarding the implementation of the applicable COA standards.

DFCS has moved into specific activities that are required to achieve accreditation. State Office staff focused on development of the self-study, which requires DFCS to put together documentation and write narratives to show compliance with all the COA standards. The self-study was completed and submitted to COA for approval

An accreditation timeline has been finalized with completion of the accreditation process planned for late 2014. The next phase of the accreditation process is the site visits which will begin in state office and move to each regional and county office. These visits are scheduled to begin in January 2013. During the site visits, the COA Peer Review Team will interview staff, clients, foster parents, community members, review case records and inspect facilities. Following each site visit, DFCS will await the Accreditation Commission's decision on the accreditation of the particular site visited. There will be an opportunity to respond to any findings that are below standard. Each region and the state office must pass accreditation in order for the Division of Family and Children's Services to be accredited.

B. Development of the Mississippi Child Welfare Practice Model (MCWPM): In February 2009, DFCS contracted with the Center for the Support of Families (CSF) to assist in developing the child welfare Practice Model for implementation in the State. The Department's interest in developing a practice model stems from its current efforts to implement requirements associated with the *Olivia Y. Settlement Agreement*, the Council on Accreditation (COA) standards, and the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) at the same time. While many of the requirements and outcome measures of the State's various mandates are similar, others are specific to the Settlement Agreement, the COA standards, or the CFSR. DFCS coordinates these many efforts and multiple requirements in ways that are non-duplicative, clearly understood by staff in the 82 counties in the State, that will lead to the best and most efficient and coordinated use of limited State resources, and that offer the most promise for improving outcomes for children and families and achieve the goals in place for the State's child welfare system.

Toward this end, the State decided to frame its many mandates within a model of child welfare practice that staff and providers in the field will easily understand, adapt to, and incorporate into their interventions with children and families. The State recognizes that staff and providers in the field, who will ultimately be responsible for meeting the requirements, need a conceptual framework that is value-based and principle-driven that they can rely on to guide their work with children and families on a daily basis, and that such a framework will help staff and providers understand the reasons and values behind their interventions as opposed to being more compliance-driven in order to simply meet the terms of the current legal mandates before the State. The values and principles that will provide the foundation for the Practice Model are the DFCS child welfare mission statement and principles and the CFSR guiding principles which include family-centered practice, community-based services, individualized services, and strengthening parental capacity to care for their children.

During the spring of 2009, the contractor (CSF) began collecting information about the status of child welfare practice and outcomes in Mississippi through focus groups with staff and supervisors, and interviews with child welfare stakeholders in the State. CSF also cross-referenced the many practice related requirements of the Settlement Agreement, COA standards, and the CFSR to identify areas of similarity and difference. Based on this analysis, and the guiding principles noted above, CSF developed six broad components of child welfare interventions that will comprise the core of the Practice Model, which include the following:

- Mobilizing appropriate services timely;
- Safety assurance and risk management;
- Involving children and parents in decision making;
- Strengths and needs assessments;
- Preserving connections and relationships; and
- Individualized case planning.

The Mississippi Child Welfare Practice Model, completed September 25, 2009, was developed in a principle-based and outcome-oriented manner grounded in the Mission Statement and values of DFCS. In developing the Mississippi Child Welfare Practice Model, an assessment of policy, training, monitoring activities, resources and practice was done and information gathered from the following sources:

- An electronic survey administered to DFCS child welfare staff;
- A series of focus groups and individual interviews that included workers, supervisors, Regional Directors, parents, service providers, youth in foster care, resource families, and State Office staff;
- The court monitor's report for the *Olivia Y.* Settlement Agreement;
- Reports from the Council on Accreditation; and
- A review of DFCS child welfare policy, training curricula, and Foster Care Review (FCR) findings.

In January 2010, The Mississippi Child Welfare Practice Model was launched in Regions I South and II West. Regional implementation teams have been developed and a Regional implementation plan was implemented June 1, 2010. Baseline reviews, conducted by the Evaluation and Monitoring Unit (EMU) of the CQI Office were conducted during the month of June, 2010.

Implementation of the Mississippi Child Welfare Practice Model (MCWPM)

Region I-South and II-West (Phase One)

Regions I-South and II-West were the first two regions to implement the Mississippi Child Welfare Practice Model. Their planning period began January 1, 2010 with the initial implementation phase starting July 1, 2010. The first step in the implementation was for each region to develop a Regional Implementation Team. DFCS Evaluations and Monitoring Unit (EMU) staff and CSF representatives presented an overview of the MCWPM and the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process to staff in each region (supervisors and direct service workers).

Both regions held community kick off meetings in April 2010 to engage stakeholders in the development of their implementation plans and to strengthen the agency's partnership with community resources. In June of 2010, Regions I-S and II-W each submitted their Regional Implementation Plans and the baseline EMU reviews were conducted in each region. Following

the release of the EMU baseline reviews final reports, “Data to Action” meetings were held to assist Regional Directors and their staff in using the finding of the report to revise the regional practice model implementation plans.

The MCWPM training of supervisors in regions I-S and II-W began in July and August 2010. The initial training in I-S and II-W did not include a module on safety because the statewide maltreatment training was being delivered at the same time. In September and October 2010, the DHS PM Coaches delivered the training of the practice model to the direct service staff in their respective regions.

Regions I-S and II-W completed the Initial Implementation Phase of the practice model rollout between July 2010 and June 2011. During this time the practice model was introduced to staff through training and coaching of supervisors and social workers. The Full/Ongoing Implementation Phase began approximately in September 2011 after a follow-up EMU review to evaluate the Regions’ progress during the Initial Implementation Phase. During the Full/Ongoing Implementation Phase, the Regions will receive additional training and coaching, including instruction in specific areas such as safety and risk assessment, Family Team Meetings, and other components of the practice model. The Full/Ongoing Implementation Phase will run through August 2012, after which the Regions will be expected to comply with outcomes in the *Olivia Y* Settlement Agreement.

Regions V-West and IV-North

DFCS EMU staff and CSF representatives presented an overview of the MCWPM and the CQI process to staff in each region (supervisors and direct service workers) in August 2010. In September 2010, a meeting was held between CFS representatives and the V-W and IV-N Regional Directors to initiate the discussion of their MCWPM implementation. Topics discussed were the development of the Regional Implementation Team and Plan, preparation for the initial desk audit and baseline EMU review, and the schedule and process regarding roll-out of the coaching activities. Regions V-W and IV-N submitted the first draft of their Implementation Plan at the end of December 2010.

Region V-West participated in their baseline EMU review in late November 2010. MCWPM supervisory training was held in January 2011 with approximately 18 participants. The “Data to Action” meeting was held in April 2011. By the end of March 2011, all staff had participated in the MCWPM worker training.

Region IV-North had its baseline EMU Review in January 2011. MCWPM training supervisory training was held in February 2011 and by the end of March 2011 all workers had participated in the MCWPM worker training. Their “Data to Action” meeting was held May 18, 2011.

Regional Directors from both regions in collaboration with CFS met to discuss next steps for implementation of the Practice Model. (Region V-W met on April 7, and Region IV-N met on

March 9th). Both regions were scheduled to submit updates to their Regional Implementation Plans by April 30, 2011.

Region V-West began the Initial Implementation Phase of the practice model rollout in January 2011 and was on track to complete the phase in December 2011, after which the Full/Ongoing Implementation Phase will begin in approximately March 2012 after a follow-up EMU review.

Although Regions V-West and IV-North began implementation of the practice model on the same schedule, progress in Region IV-North did not proceed as quickly as in V-West and an additional six months was added to IV-North's Initial Implementation Phase which began in January 2011 and is scheduled to end in June 2012.

Regions I-North, III-South and IV-South

An introductory meeting was held on January 5, 2011 with the three Regional Directors and their Regional ASWS to initiate their planning phase and discuss key activities regarding their MCWPM implementation including: development of the Regional Implementation Team and Plan, preparation for the initial desk audit and baseline CQI review, and the schedule and process regarding roll-out of the coaching activities.

All three regions completed the practice model/CQI meetings for their staff during the first quarter of 2011. Region I-N held their Regional Implementation Meeting on February 15, 2011. Regions III-N and IV-S held their Implementation Meeting in March 2011. Region I-N's baseline EMU review was held May 10-13, 2011.

All three Regions completed their Planning Phase in June 2011 and began the Initial Implementation Phase in July 2011. Baseline EMU reviews were conducted in all three of the Regions. They are scheduled to complete the Initial Implementation Phase in June 2012. They have all received training in the practice model components and developed implementation plans.

Region V-East began the six-month Planning Phase of practice model rollout in July 2011 and will complete that phase in December 2011, after which it will begin the Initial Implementation Phase in January 2012. During the Planning Phase, Region V-East will complete an implementation plan, convene a Regional Implementation Team, and have a baseline EMU review conducted.

Regions III-North and VII-East also began the Planning Phase in July 2011, but were given an additional six months of planning in order to address staffing issues within the Regions. They are currently scheduled to complete the Planning Phase in June 2012 and begin Initial Implementation in July 2012. Baseline EMU reviews have been conducted in both regions.

Next Steps:

- Each Region will follow the rollout schedule for implementing the practice model, including the six-month Planning Phase, a twelve-month Initial Implementation Phase, and a twelve-month Full/Ongoing Implementation Phase. Exceptions thus far to this schedule have been noted above.
- The CQI Office will conduct baseline EMU reviews as each Region initiates the Initial Implementation Phase, a follow-up EMU review after the completion of the Initial Implementation Phase, and annual follow-up reviews thereafter.
- As Regions complete the Full/Ongoing Implementation Phase, they will begin to be accountable for reaching outcomes noted in the *Olivia Y.* Settlement Agreement.
- The next Regions scheduled to begin the Planning Phase of the practice model rollout are Regions II-East, VI, and VII-West, which will begin that phase in July 2012. At that point, all Regions in the State will have either completed or be in some phase of the implementation process.

Update as of April 2013:

As of April 2013, all 13 Regions are involved in some phase of the practice model implementation process. Regions III-North and VII-East completed the six-month planning phase in June 2012 and began the one-year Initial Implementation Phase in July 2012. That phase will conclude in June 2013, after which follow-up CQI reviews will occur and the Regions will begin the Full Implementation Phase. Regions II-East, VI, and VII-West completed the six-month planning phase in December 2012 and began the Initial Implementation Phase in January 2013, which will continue through December 2013. Staff in all Regions has completed the Practice Model training and new hires will receive the training through the Department's pre-service training curriculum which now incorporates the Practice Model training. Three Regions, I-South, II-West, and V-West, are currently in the Data Tracking Year following their completion of the Full Implementation Phase. In August 2013, at the conclusion of the Data Tracking Year, Regions I-South and II-West will be accountable for meeting certain performance measures in the Modified Settlement Agreement. Region V-West will need to demonstrate its conformity with the measures in February 2014.

C. Atlantic Coast Child Welfare Implementation Center (ACCWIC): The Atlantic Coast Child Welfare Implementation Center is one of five Centers established in 2008 by the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau. The ACCWIC works with child welfare agencies to implement strategies to achieve sustainable, systemic change that results in greater safety, permanency and well-being for children, youth and families.

DFCS entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the ACCWIC for a project term July 1, 2009-September 20, 2011 to provide technical assistance for the purpose of executing the Mississippi Change Management Implementation Project to develop the organizational capacity to plan, implement and sustain Mississippi's family centered Practice Model, the Mississippi Child Welfare Practice Model. ACCWIC has conducted organizational and readiness

assessments in Forest County and Harrison County to assess readiness for family centered practice. The ACCWIC will provide coaching on best practices, foster systemic and lasting improvements, promote peer-to-peer learning and networking, create toolkits and develop resource manuals to document what works and under what conditions and ways, as well as design methodologies to develop findings that inform implementation and facilitate continuous quality practice.

In June 2010, ACCWIC was the project installation phase:

- Teams are organized;
- Stakeholders were interviewed in April;
- The project was presented to DFCS Senior Management in May ;
- An assessment survey was conducted in mid-May;
- Training was conducted in June; and
- Learning labs follow in additional locations.

Additional assistance was requested and granted through June 2012, convening DFCS Senior Management planning meetings.

T/TA was completed timely in 2012 and a plan was implemented to sustain the progress made in the following areas:

- Regular Senior Management Meetings are being planned and convened as needed.
- The workforce assessment feedback developed by the University of Denver continues to be implemented.

D. Mississippi Change Management Implementation Project: The Change Management Implementation Project in Mississippi will target and isolate two active, critical and high-profile counties in South Mississippi, Forrest and Harrison. The counties were affected significantly by Hurricane Katrina. Both have historically presented issues of differing natures and characteristics from each other, but unique in the State in not only the characteristics themselves, but in the long-standing nature of the characteristics. Such characteristics constitute major obstacles to the implementation of family-centered practice and the achievement of desirable outcomes for families and children. These counties during year one of the Project will in essence become a case study for organizational analysis in Change Management Strategy and, in year two, a case study in effective implementation. All CFSR systemic factors will be analyzed, assessed and addressed in both phases of the project – Statewide Information System, Case Review System, Quality Assurance, Training, Service Array, and Agency Responsiveness to the Community, Foster Parent Licensing, Recruitment and Retention. Organizational factors to be analyzed, assessed and addressed in addition to these CFSR systemic factors include recruitment, hiring and retention of staff; organizational structure; leadership, administration and supervision; and any other factors, taking nothing for granted, which influence effective practice. In terms of practice, all CFSR outcomes will be considered in measuring improvement in the delivery of

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Submitted: June 30, 2013

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services through the implementation of the Practice Model with special emphasis, due to nature, principles and values of family-centered practice, being focused on Safety Outcome 2 – children being safely maintained in their homes when possible and appropriate; Permanency Outcome 1 – children having permanency and stability in their living situations; Permanency Outcome 2 – the preservation of the continuity of family relationships and connections for children; and Well-being Outcome 1 – the enhanced capacity of families to provide for their children’s needs.

The ultimate objective of the Change Management Implementation Project is not merely the implementation of the Family-Centered Practice approach in the target counties, but the institutionalization of a Family-Centered Practice culture within the organization throughout the State through the development of a strategy and model from the effort of organizational analysis and development undergone in the target area during the two year project. The Project provided the methodology and know-how to assure sustenance. The anticipation is for a landmark study, taking nothing for granted, considering all variables, which will provide a blueprint for success not only in implementation, but in institutionalization of effective child welfare practice, which consistently results in desirable outcomes for children and families.

T/TA was completed timely in 2012 and a plan was implemented to sustain the progress made with community partner groups in Forrest and Harrison County, which remain in place to implement the Mississippi Child Welfare Practice Model.

E. Casey Family Programs

Permanency Round Tables (PRTs)

Casey Family Programs is working with the agency in implementing Permanency Round Tables (PRT) and will deliver Permanency Values Training and Permanency Skills Training to stakeholders and staff participating in the Permanency Roundtables. In addition to the formal training, staff of Casey Family Programs will be coaches to DFCS staff in the actual Permanency Round Table meetings.

DFCS staff was introduced to Permanency Round Tables by Casey Family Programs in November 2010, at a Permanency Summit held in Natchez, Mississippi.

From the Permanency Summit, a plan was developed to pilot the permanency round tables in two regions of the state – one in the Delta and one on the Coast. A criterion for the selection of cases for the PRTs was children who had been in care three or more years. The MACWIS ad hoc Report MWAH01 – Children in Custody 3 Years or More was used to develop the list of cases to be reviewed. In Region 2 West, 65 children were identified who met the criteria. After the cases were validated, 48 children were selected for the PRTs. The teams for the PRTs were selected from the field and state office and consisted of a Facilitator, Master Practitioner, Scribe and a Permanency Consultant from Casey who also acted to DFCS staff during the actual PRT meetings. DFCS staff chosen to participate was staff that expressed interest in learning more about the process and had demonstrated a commitment to permanency.

The PRTs for Region 2 West were held the week of May 23 – 27, 2011 in Greenville, MS. The first two days of the week were training sessions conducted by staff from Casey. The first day's training was "Permanency Values Training" and included stakeholders from the region, court personnel, the PRT team members and the workers who had cases to be presented at the PRTs. The second day of training was "Permanency Roundtable Skills Training" for the team members. The third through the fifth days were the actual PRTs. There were four Roundtable teams with three sessions per day. The sessions were two hours long for a single child and two and a half hours long for a sibling group. At the conclusion of each day, a debriefing was held for the team members to talk about common themes which had emerged during the sessions and any barriers to permanency identified during the roundtable sessions.

During each session, the worker and supervisor presented the case summary, the team asked clarifying questions, and together a plan was developed of tasks to be accomplished to help the child(ren) achieve permanency. Each of the tasks was assigned to particular members of the team. A Follow Up session was held in Region 2 West in August of 2011 to review the progress made in obtaining permanence for the children whose cases were reviewed in the May Permanency Round Tables. The teams who reviewed the cases in May were reassembled and each case was reviewed with an update on the Action Plans developed by the teams.

Update for 2011-2012:

During the time period from May 1, 2011 to September 30, 2012, PRTs were completed for the following regions: II West, (May 2011), VII East, V West (both in October 2011) and I North, I South and II East (all in April 2012). In Region II West (counties Coahoma, East Bolivar, Humphreys, Washington, West Bolivar, and Sunflower) 49 children were round-tabled. In Region VII East (counties George, Greene and Jackson) 56 children were round-tabled. For Region V West (counties Adams, Amite, Claiborne, Franklin, Jefferson, Pike, Walthall and Wilkinson) 27 children were round-tabled. In April 2012, Regions I North (Alcorn, Benton, Desoto, Marshall, Prentiss, Tippah and Tishomingo) 25 children were round-tabled and for I South (counties Calhoun, East Chickasaw, Itawamba, Lafayette, Lee, Monroe, Pontotoc, Union, and West Chickasaw) 24 children were round-tabled. For II East (counties Carroll, Grenada, Leflore, Montgomery, Panola, Quitman, Tallahatchie, Tate, Tunica and Yalobusha) 34 children were round-tabled.

The state office Foster Care Unit has begun tracking information to develop a data report that will summarize the progress of children who have been round-tabled up to this point. Follow-up is being conducted regarding permanency status of children round-tabled. This information will be used in the data tool that will include demographic information as well as numbers for permanency statuses by regions and collectively. In addition, attention has been given to revising PRT forms to be Mississippi specific.

The agency is ahead of schedule with the PRTs roll out plan in all regions required by the Settlement Agreement. A unit has been established at state office to institutionalize PRTs and staff is scheduled to participate in Casey Training-of-Trainers in May and August 2013.

Goals:

The goal is to complete the PRTs for Region V East and VI in October 2012 and Regions IV North and IV South in November 2012. A roll-out plan has been devised so that preparations can begin for the final three regions III-North, III-South and VII-West to be completed by June 2014. The last three regions PRTs are expected to extend up to two weeks each due to the number of children to be round-tabled. Once all thirteen regions have completed the PRT process, Phase II will begin with children who have been in custody for 24 months or more.

Other Initiatives with Casey Family Programs:

In addition to the Permanency Roundtables, the agency is partnering with Casey Family Programs on several other projects. Parent Representation is a project working with MDHS and the Children's Justice Commission to promote and finance legal representation for parents whose children are the subject of a youth court or chancery court action. The Casey Family staff is working with the DFCS administrative and program staff to develop performance-based contracting for all agencies with which DFCS does business.

The Mississippi Department of Human Services, Mississippi Commission on Children's Justice, Foundation for the Mid South, and Casey Family Programs organized an event titled "A Community of Hope" to discuss new comprehensive approaches to improving the lives of children and families on May 10, 2012 at The Mississippi Children's Museum. The goal is the people of Mississippi to have a shared vision of a place where all children are safe and have the support they need from the adults in their lives to grow up healthy and succeed. This was an effort to engage the entire community to ensure we strengthen families so that every child can dream big and fulfill their potential. In 2013, the Jim Casey Foundation, in conjunction with the Kellogg Foundation, will be providing technical assistance regarding youth over 18 who are transitioning out of care. MDHS sees this project as a way to improve the public image of the department while accomplishing great things for children in care.

F. Mississippi Children's Trust Fund Advisory Council

The Mississippi Children's Trust Fund (CTF) was created by the Mississippi Legislature in 1989. The primary purpose of this fund is to encourage and provide financial assistance in the provision of direct services to prevent child abuse and neglect. The CTF Advisory Council function is to provide direction and recommendation on behalf of the Mississippi CTF. The by-laws state that the CTF Advisory Council will consist of thirteen members. Each of the following agencies is represented on the council: Mississippi Department of Health, Mississippi Department of Education, Mississippi Department of Mental Health and the Mississippi Department of Human Services. In addition, there will be at least one citizen representing each of the four congressional districts in Mississippi and the remaining four members will be citizens that are knowledgeable about child abuse and neglect issues.

The Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS) is the lead agency and is responsible to the Mississippi Legislature for the CTF Advisory Council. The Division of Family and Children's Services (DFCS) has recently expanded the Prevention Unit, which will now take the lead on expanding and maintaining the advisory council's membership.

Advisory Council Meetings were held quarterly in FY2012. The Children's Trust Fund Advisory Council has been reorganized and the membership has been increased to meet the requirements set forth in the by-laws. The Council now has active representation from all required entities. A very capable chairperson has been elected and is taking charge of the Council.

Funding for the CTF is provided by the collection of a one dollar (\$1.00) fee on each original, and copies of birth certificates and a \$1,000 fine imposed by the court on each person convicted of certain offenses against children.

During FY2012, DFCS has continued to support child abuse and neglect activities including the Blue Ribbon Campaign and child abuse prevention materials for distribution throughout the year. The coordinator's salary is being paid out of the Children's Trust Fund. A poster and note pads have been designed, printed and are being distributed to the courts throughout the state to remind the judges to impose the \$1,000 fine and the court staff to correctly process the funds into the CTF.

Goals for 2013:

It is the goal of DFCS to continue holding regularly schedule Children's Trust Fund Advisory Council meetings and to build and maintain consistent attendance and participation in the meetings. The Council is very interested in providing materials for state wide distribution during the month of April and throughout the year, especially for the Mississippi State Fair in October of each year. The State Fair is an opportunity to reach a very large number of people at a minimal cost and during a relatively short time period. The CTF will again be instrumental in the planning and funding for the Picnic for Prevention in April. The Council will award two contracts in July 2013 for prevention programs and the contracts will end in June 2014. Legislation is now in place to have an automobile tags to generate funds for the CTF. The council plans to work on that task in 2013 with the goal of accomplishing the tag project in 2014. The quarterly meetings have already been scheduled for 2013.

G. Walter R. McDonald & Associates (WRMA) – MACWIS Alternatives Analysis Project

The Division of Family and Children Services has collaborated with Walter R. McDonald & Associates (WRMA) to analyze DFCS' use of the Mississippi Automated Child Welfare Information System (MACWIS) and recommend strategies to improve its utility to the department. DFCS entered into a contract with WRMA in December 2010 and finalized the contact in January 2011. WRMA will provide professional services assisting department staff in analyzing alternatives for the enhancement or replacement of the technologies which comprise the MACWIS system. The kick off of this project officially began April 4, 2011

The MACWIS Alternatives Analysis Project is comprised of phases of development. The first phase is an assessment of the MACWIS system, identifying deficiencies in the existing system, business processes, policies, regulations and practices. To accomplish this, WRMA will hold discussion sessions at the state office with users of the MACWIS system from all program areas and in three regions (I S, III S, and IV S) across the state with county staff that utilizes the MACWIS system in all the functional and program areas. In addition, WRMA held similar

sessions with MIS to assess current system architecture and needs for a future system. The assessment phases and work of this project commenced in June 2011. The second phase of the project is the development of current and future system requirements derived from the assessments. These requirements support DFCS' current and planned business processes, the requirements of the *Olivia Y. et al. v. Barbour* Lawsuit and Reform Plan (Settlement Agreement), its annual Implementation Plans and Council on Accreditation (COA) requirements and Federal SACWIS requirements. Several documents were produced as a result of these assessments and presented to DFCS for review and acceptance. To date, state project staff are reviewing these documents and providing feedback to WRMA for areas needing clarity. Some of the documents have been finalized and accepted. The final recommendation will provide DFCS with available alternatives that include a cost benefit analysis and a recommended solution.

2011-2012 Update:

In October 2011, a second group of experienced DFCS staff was paneled to review and refine the original set of draft requirements that had been previously gathered. This group was specifically charged with determining if:

- The requirements were an essential part of the new MACWIS (required), should it be included as an "optional" requirement or if the requirement is not something the new system needs to do at all.
- The requirements accurately defined what the system needs to do and if not, how should it be reworded.
- All requirements were included.
- The requirements accurately meet and define business process as they are related to the *Olivia Y. et al. v. Barbour* Settlement Agreement and Reform Plan, its annual Implementation Plans and COA requirements.

A final requirements review session was held in December 2011. Reviewers included key State office management staff and some county staff that had previously participated in review sessions. This team reviewed and approved the final set of requirements.

While the current business processes of MDHS/DFCS were being gathered and documented, WRMA was concurrently conducting assessments of other states' child welfare practice, business practices and IT systems to aid in the comparison of Mississippi's business practice and the development of a Cost Benefit and Risk Analysis. The purpose was to establish an estimate of the state's fiscal responsibility and feasibilities associated with an alternative SACWIS solution based on other states' documented experiences to a new or replacement SACWIS.

As other intricate steps and processes of the analysis project were being carried out, WRMA staff reviewed and compiled all previously gathered and approved documents in preparation of writing the final project report which listed options the state has in an alternatives approach to a new or replacement system. Based on the final MACWIS Alternatives Analysis Project as a whole, WRMA noted that Mississippi has three viable options for the replacement of MACWIS:

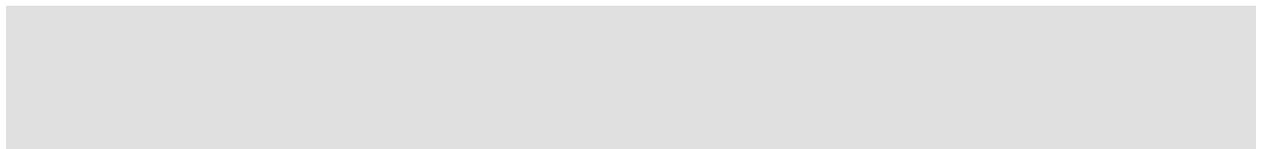
- Major enhancement of the current MACWIS system with current technologies and functionality that corresponds to the desired technical and functional requirements defined during the Requirements Analysis Phase – this is essentially a rewrite of the current MACWIS system.
- Transfer of an existing SACWIS system from another state ported to work on a technology environment consistent with the Department’s standards and the capabilities of the transferred system, and meeting the technical and functional requirements defined during the Requirements Analysis Phase.
- Develop a new system that conforms to the Department’s standards, and meets the technical and functional requirements defined during the Requirements Analysis Phase by using a human services framework to correspond to the development or replacement of other systems within the Department.”

Understanding that MDHS/DFCS intends to replace MACWIS as a stand-alone system, the stated recommendation from the findings of the analysis project was transferring a system. WRMA further stated that the costs for implementation of a MACWIS replacement will be approximately \$40 million (\$2.7M for planning and \$37.3M for development and implementation). This includes staff, office space, equipment, hardware, overhead, and contracts. After implementation, on-going maintenance support will be approximately \$3M per year.

The final WRMA briefing was held on June 12, 2012. MDHS Executive management and DFCS executive management was invited to attend. The finality of the WRMA contract for the MACWIS Alternatives Analysis Project was the close out in June 2012.

H. 200 Million Flowers

200 Million Flowers is a non-profit, Christian organization seeking to connect children with families in Mississippi. One focus is on promoting children already in the overwhelmed state foster care system. 200 Million Flowers executed a no-charge service agreement with the DHS to support and facilitate the adoption of these children. A second focus is crisis pregnancies and adoption. In Mississippi, over 5,000 teenagers give birth each year, which as a percentage is the highest rate in the country. Part of the mission is to help create a paradigm shift for those facing crisis pregnancies so adoption is considered a viable, loving choice. Poorly equipped and unprepared parenting perpetuates family poverty and further burdens the state’s foster care, social services, and welfare systems. These brave girls are identified and recruited by the organization that then provides counseling, educational support, and medical services, regardless of whether they choose parenting or an adoption plan. 200 Million Flowers qualifies would-be adoptive parents, educates the public about the global orphan crisis at home and abroad and provides outreach to different partners.



V. PROGRAM SUPPORT

A. Professional Development and Training Unit

The mission of the Professional Development Unit is to provide quality training to enhance the knowledge, skills and abilities of DFCS personnel and to prepare them to assume their responsibilities.

Child and Family Services Plan Update

This section updates the DFCS CFSP 2010-2014 with plans to promote professional education and development through the expansion of MSW program by working with universities throughout Mississippi. It then describes efforts to enhance the training of new caseworkers and supervisors and to grow its in-house training capacity.

Professional Education and Development

MSW Program for Currently Employed Staff

DFCS has awarded contracts to Jackson State University, University of Mississippi and University of Southern Mississippi to provide necessary coursework for caseworkers and supervisors currently employed with DFCS to earn their Master's in Social Work (MSW). University partners support the mission and values of DFCS as reflected in the Child Welfare Practice Model that is being implemented throughout various regions of the State. Each university has assembled cohorts for DFCS employees and classes are scheduled in conjunction with their work hours to include the agency's compressed work schedule. The MSW cohorts have been designed and implemented specifically for the non-traditional, child welfare employed MSW students.

Students are required to complete 60 hours of coursework to earn their degree. Students, including some who are not in the cohort, who achieve a grade point average of "B" or higher generally receive reimbursement for their tuition, fees and books. Students will complete their field placements within DFCS and will commit to serving at the agency for up to three years after graduation. Those students who fail to complete up to three years with the agency after graduation may be required to repay reimbursements by the agency for tuition, fees and books.

Expansion and Enhancement of Staff Training

Pre-service Training for New Caseworkers

DFCS has partnered with the University of Mississippi to develop and deliver a pre-service training curriculum for new caseworkers. The 9 - week pre-service training includes the principles of the new Child Welfare Practice Model.

New caseworker training includes an on-the-job training component. Its modules cover topics consistent with the Title IVE program. The curriculum is not designed to distinguish between foster care and child welfare populations. Instead, as permitted by the Children's Bureau, it

recognizes that training needs to account for the “total child.” This comprehensive approach allows the training program to cover the full range of activities, including those needed to meet Title IV-E maintenance and service requirements, without having to develop dual trainings – one for foster care and another for protection. The following offers a couple of examples taken from the Child Welfare Policy Manual, 8.1H.8, consistent with Mississippi’s program:

- Social work practice, such as family centered practice and social work methods including interviewing and assessment.
- Cultural competency related to children and families.
- Child abuse and neglect issues, such as the impact of child abuse and neglect on a child.

New caseworkers will carry no caseload during non-classroom training. New caseworkers will receive rigorous feedback on the work experience component of the training; further, the staff will receive more intensive supervision during the on-the-job training period; and the trainees’ performance will be closely monitored and assessed.

Technical Assistance and Support Services

DFCS contracts with various partners for technical assistance and research and evaluation to guide practice and policy. These efforts are designed to support the State’s commitment to continuous quality improvement as well as improved safety, permanency and well-being outcomes for children and families served. Support is given in areas like the Child and Family Services Review, effective supervision and policy development.

Training for New Supervisors

DFCS has awarded a contract to the University of Mississippi to develop and deliver a training curriculum for new supervisors. The contract will provide training for new and seasoned supervisors throughout Mississippi. The university will be required to develop and deliver a curriculum for Supervisory Training; DFCS training coordinators will partner with university trainers on an ongoing basis to assure that the principles taught in the classroom are implemented in practice. A train-the-trainer curriculum will be used to help transfer knowledge and skills to DFCS staff.

Intensive Supervisory Training

DFCS is developing and implementing Intensive Supervisory Support activities that will build the capacity of county supervisors to manage the work, lead change efforts in their counties and help their staff to perform consistently at high levels of quality work with children and families. The supervisory training is focused on improving the quality of supervision with the goal of improving upon the quality of work done in the field. The supervisors will be presented with data regarding their counties that will speak to quality visits with children. Individual professional development plans will be developed with supervisors regarding underlying conditions, barriers, and needs that result in unsuccessful visits. Coaches will determine the skills that can be built by training and targeted specific coaching that will improve direct practice, including quality visits. Supervision is the link that needs to be enhanced that will lead to quality visits.

DFCS continues to explore initiatives that will capitalize on training and tools which strategically improve the quality and quantity of face-to-face visits with children and their families; as well as, focusing on the recruitment and retention of caseworkers.

Professional Development Unit

In-house Training Capacity

DFCS is enhancing its in-house Professional Development Unit used for staff training. This unit is being expanded to provide training coordinators to support the 13 regions within the Division for the development and delivery of training. Efforts will be made to ensure that training expenses, including personnel expenditures and other related costs, are charged to the appropriate funding streams.

Goals

- Enhance the quality of training provided to DFCS staff
 - Child Welfare Professional Development four week pre-service training sessions offered throughout the year in multiple regions;
 - Forty hour Pre-Service Training offered for newly hired/promoted front line supervisors;
 - On-going training sessions offered throughout the year for workers and supervisors; and
 - Child Welfare Professional Development pre-service training curriculum updated as new policy is issued.
- Expand Training Unit Staff to support regionally based training plan
 - Request PINs for 13 new Training Coordinators;
 - Request PINs for 13 Training Specialists;
 - Addition of computer programmer to develop eLearning curriculum;
 - Addition of MACWIS technician; and
 - Addition of Program Specialist for clerical/book keeping training.
- Continue training initiatives and collaborative efforts
 - Administrative Office of Courts;
 - Partner with Universities in coordinated activities for DFCS staff returning to school to pursue advanced social work degrees;
 - University of Mississippi Medical Center Children's Justice Center; and
 - Continued funding to encourage staff enrollment in the Tuition Assistance program.

Progress toward Meeting Goals

The agency entered a partnership with the University of Mississippi for the development and delivery of Pre-Service Training for frontline staff;

- 3 Child Welfare Professional Development training classes were delivered during the reporting period and 4 newly revised Pre-Service Trainings for frontline staff were

delivered during his year. A total of 60 workers completed CWPD before the revision and a total of 156 new hires completed the Pre-Service training. This gives a total number of 216 staff who have been through the 270 hour training;

- In conjunction with the partnership with the University of Mississippi there was also a Clinical Supervisory Training created which is a 40 hour training that is required for newly hired or promoted supervisory staff. This training was launched in February and 51 participants completed the training during the reporting period;
- 5 Two day clerical training sessions were held during the reporting period with 20 newly hired clerical staff completing the training as well as 29 supervisory and field staff
- Entered a contract with the University of Mississippi to develop and deliver the 270 hour Pre-Service training for front line staff and the 40 hour Clinical Supervisory Training for supervisory staff. This partnership began in October of 2011 and training began in February 2012.
- Workshops and Conferences:
 - Court Improvement Initiative
 - In October and November of 2010, training was delivered to direct service staff in each region on Advanced Professional Development of Court Proceedings, ICPC, IV-E eligibility and the new Uniform Youth Court Rules.
 - Beginning November 2012, training on Advanced Professional Development of Court Proceedings, ICPC, IV-E eligibility and the new Uniform Youth Court Rules is being offered quarterly for all new staff.
- More than 100 DFCS staff is enrolled in graduate level social work programs in 4 Universities across the state.
- Funds were again allocated by the state legislature to pay tuition for DFCS staff to pursue an advanced degree in social work in exchange for a work commitment after award of degree.
 - Tuition was reimbursed for 65 DFCS employees under the Professional Enhancement Scholarship Program.
 - This work force investment effort targets increased professional staff resources and encourages retention of experienced staff.
- 3 Learning Labs in each region for direct service supervisors and regional directors were delivered through a contract with the University of Southern Mississippi Social Work Training Academy

The request for expansion of Training Unit Staff was partially realized. 9 Training Coordinators are working across the state to help with on-the-job training and begin the development of on-going training for staff statewide. The Unit added a Bureau Director and a Division Director II.

A train-the-trainer was conducted with all of the training coordinators as well as a survey to determine training needs across the state. The agency trainers were paired together to research and develop training topics that will be delivered across the state. These trainings will be delivered in the upcoming year.

Casey Family Programs is working with the agency in implementing their program of Permanency Roundtables and will deliver Permanency Values Training and Permanency Skills Training to stakeholders and staff participating in the Permanency Roundtables. In addition to the formal training, staff of Casey Family Programs will be acting as coaches to DFCS staff in the actual Permanency Roundtable meetings.

In cooperation with the Mississippi Band of Choctaws Model Court, the Forrest County Model Court and the Court Improvement Project, the DFCS Court Improvement Workgroup developed and sponsored an Indian Child Welfare Act Conference for DFCS staff and court personnel. Assistance for the conference was provided by the National Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues, The National Resource Center for Tribes and The National Council for Juvenile and Family Court Judges.

Future Plans for Training Program

Advanced Professional Social Work Education for staff will continue to be encouraged through the agency's Professional Enhancement Scholarship Program and through the MSW cohort agreements with universities in the state.

The development of on-going training will become a reality in the coming year. A statewide training calendar will be developed and various topics will be delivered by the Professional Development Unit across the state.

Workforce Information

Workforce Development Plan

The Division of Family & Children's Services, through generous support from Casey Family Programs, obtained the services and support of the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) to develop a Workforce Development Plan to positively affect recruitment and retention of agency staff throughout Mississippi. The intention of the Workforce Development Plan is to address current and potential agency gaps (through data analysis, staff surveys, interviews, and focus groups) and strategize remedies to improve recruitment efforts, as well as to increase staff capacity, efficacy, and retention throughout the Division of Family & Children's Services with the long-term goal of ultimately improving outcomes for Mississippi children and families.

The Workforce Development Plan was designed to accompany and support the implementation of the *Olivia Y. Modified Settlement Agreement (MSA)* and Mississippi Practice Model, and includes financial projections and staffing progress information. In addition to information regarding statewide improvement efforts, a section of the plan focuses on workforce issues in the counties of Hinds, Harrison, Hancock, and Jackson counties, identified in the MSA as "Carve Out Counties". These counties have historically had difficulty in recruiting and retaining quality staff for reasons that believed to be county/region specific. In collaboration with APHSA, periodic workgroups were held to review assessment findings and develop strategies to address

identified issues. The Workforce Development Plan creates an avenue to make recruitment and retention efforts meaningful and measurable, with the intention of improving employee effectiveness, client satisfaction, and the public’s perception of MDHS-DFCS over time. A draft of the Carve Out section was submitted to the *Olivia Y. Court* Monitor for review in September 2012, and the agency continued preparation of the statewide plan for submission in December 2012.

Recruitment

One of the greatest issues affecting the workforce and overall success of DFCS is the ability to effectively recruit and hire qualified staff. In recent months, numerous activities have taken place to improve and increase staff recruitment. Representatives from the MDHS Human Resources Division and DFCS Director of Workforce Development have actively recruited for available positions within DFCS at numerous career fairs, employment expos, and professional conferences throughout the state. This includes agency participation in the Governor’s Job Fair Network, a unique employment resource consisting of regionally-based career fairs for Mississippi residents and employers. A listing of recruitment events attended during this reporting period are listed below:

Date	Event	Location
03/21/2012	Mississippi Employment Expo	Jackson, MS
03/22/2012 – 03/23/2012	NASW Mississippi Annual Conference	Natchez, MS
03/26/2012	Delta State University School of Social Work Career Fair	Cleveland, MS
04/10/2012	Spring Southern Region Military & Civilian Job Fair	Biloxi, MS
05/30/2012	Rankin County Area Job Fair	Pearl, MS
09/25/2012	Mississippi State University Career Fair	Starkville, MS
09/26/2012	Jobs For Jacksonians Job Fair	Jackson, MS
10/04/2012	Jackson State University Career Fair	Jackson, MS
10/09/2012	Desoto County Area Job Fair	Southaven, MS

The agency currently advertises positions on various employment websites to attract potential candidates who may not otherwise check the State Personnel Board’s website for job listings. These sites include indeed.com, simplyhired.com, and craigslist.com, and listings on these sites are managed by the DFCS Workforce Development and Personnel Units. Additionally, DFCS has launched a collaborative effort with *Parents & Kids* magazine that includes the featuring of recruitment advertisements in their issues as part of a collaborative effort with the DFCS Prevention Unit. Issues of *Parents & Kids* are circulated in various areas throughout the state including Northeast MS, Central MS, and in the Pine Belt Region. The Director of Workforce Development will work to feature similar advertisements in newspapers and other local publications.

As part of the development of the Workforce Development Plan, present salaries were identified as a significant barrier to the recruitment and retention of qualified staff. While employee salaries are not determined within the agency, but rather by the legislature, this presents a challenge in ensuring that the salaries offered by DFCS are competitive with other human service organizations who may be competing for similarly qualified candidates. Given the critical staffing needs in Hinds, Harrison, Hancock, and Jackson Counties throughout recent years, MDHS management approved a 15% recruitment incentive for employees working in these counties. While the agency did see progress with regard to recruitment in Harrison and Jackson Counties, Harrison and Hancock Counties did not produce a considerable increase in staffing ability. To address this issue, MDHS management has requested and received approval for an additional 20% Type Duty Location Pay to attract qualified candidates. This increase has made DFCS more competitive with other human service agencies than ever before in its efforts to recruit qualified child welfare professionals. The current salaries, with recruitment incentives, for these critical need counties are listed below:

Hinds County

Area Social Work Supervisor (ASWS): \$43,138.52
Family Protection Specialist, Advanced (FPS, Adv.): \$37,605.49
Family Protection Specialist, Senior (FPS, Sr.): \$34,557.43
Family Protection Specialist (FPS): \$31,757.88
Family Protection Worker II (FPWII): \$31,757.88
Family Protection Worker I (FPWI): \$27,190.12

Jackson, Harrison, & Hancock Counties

Area Social Work Supervisor (ASWS): \$50,640.88
Family Protection Specialist, Advanced (FPS, Adv.): \$44,145.58
Family Protection Specialist, Senior (FPS, Sr.): \$40,567.42
Family Protection Specialist (FPS): \$37,280.99
Family Protection Worker II (FPSII): \$37,280.99
Family Protection Worker I (FPWI): \$31,918.83

Through development of the Workforce Development Plan, time to hire was identified as a barrier to the recruitment of staff. To alleviate this issue, DFCS developed strategies for streamlining the hiring process and expediting personnel transactions. Examples of these strategies include the reorganization and expansion of the DFCS Personnel Unit, communication with Regional Director regarding the hiring process, and the identification of pending applications from perpetual MS State Personnel Board advertisements. It is the hope that targeted recruitment efforts, in combination with currently offered recruitment incentives and upgrades to the hiring process will result in the ability of DFCS to effectively recruit qualified staff. Since the implementation of these efforts, the agency has seen an improvement with regard to staffing in the Carve Out Counties and throughout Mississippi.

**Carve Out County Staffing Progress
January 2012-October 2012**

	Jan 2012	Feb 2012	Mar 2012	Apr 2012	May 2012	Jun 2012	Jul 2012	Aug 2012	Sep 2012	Oct 2012
Hinds	38	38	36	35	35	36	42	43	45	48
Harrison	29	32	36	41	41	38	43	43	44	40
Jackson	28	30	30	29	29	29	36	35	37	36
Hancock	13	16	13	15	15	14	18	17	14	12

Staff Retention

According to the results of the 2011 DFCS Annual Retention & Worker Satisfaction Survey, the majority of agency staff report overall satisfaction with their jobs (70.9%), and feeling a sense of pride in the work that they do (90.1%). However, less than half (43%) reported feeling that their workload is manageable and allows them to do quality work with the families that they serve. Given that research proves that child welfare caseworker turnover negatively impacts permanency outcomes for children, the agency has worked to identify the causes of staff turnover throughout DFCS and to make improvements that will improve our ability to retain staff.

The recruitment incentives mentioned in the section above were also offered to current staff working in the critical need counties of Hinds, Harrison, Hancock, and Jackson counties, respectively, in order to retain staff in these areas. Other initiatives have been developed to improve the retention of quality staff, including the development of a multi-level Clinical Supervisory Training to support and strengthen agency supervision, improvements to physical work space, the use of Realistic Job Profiles as part of the pre-interview process and the development of a Youth Court Strategies plan to alleviate issues with judicial engagement in some areas. Providing recognition through the use of the agency newsletter, as well as through issuing state service pins and certificates are additional ways that the agency will work to improve employee morale and reduce avoidable staff turnover. By retaining qualified, well-trained direct service staff and supervisors, the agency will be better equipped to provide services and improve outcomes for the families that we serve.

Education Liaison

DFCS has a staff liaison between the universities and DFCS to promote collaboration in the supplying and training of social workers. The following activities were achieved in FFY 2010:

- Scheduled and attended numerous Licensure Preparation Workshops;
- Attended several University of Southern Mississippi 360 Committee Meetings which focused on DFCS employees enrolled in their MSW program;
- Participated in Career Fairs;
- Processed applications and reimbursement paperwork for the Professional Enhancement Scholarship (PE);

- Chair PE Scholarship Committee;
- Completed and submitted reports regarding licensure, PE Scholarship, etc.;
- Chaired the Worker Qualifications Workgroup;
- Participated in the Training and Supervision Workgroup;
- Member of the HR Workgroup;
- Provided material for the Child Welfare Professional Development (CWPD) Newsletters;
- Communicated professional workshop/conference information to DFCS personnel;
- Assisted with CWPD as a MACWIS Coach in March, 2011;
- Assisted in the development of DFCS employee recruitment postcards; and
- Developed recruitment notifications for Mississippi Colleges/Universities with accredited Social Work programs geared specifically for the coastal counties.

B. Technical Assistance Requested and/or Received

- DFCS continues to maintain collaboration with the National Resource Centers. Staff participates in the teleconferences sponsored by the NRCs on a regular basis:
- NRC for Family Connections and Permanency Planning
- NRC for Recruitment and Retention of Foster and Adoptive Parents
- NRC for Adoption
- NRC on Legal and Judicial Issues/NCJFCJ and NRC for Tribes (Collaborative)
- NRC for Youth Development
- NRC for Community Based Child Abuse Prevention
- NRC for Child Protective Services
- NRC for Child Welfare Data and Technology

Other Technical Assistance:

- ACCWIC - Statewide Implementation of Family Centered Practice Model – Completed in 2012.
- Center for the Support of Families
- Casey Family Programs – Permanency Roundtables
- National Counsel for Juvenile and Family Court Judges
- American Bar Association

C. Prevention and Protection Unit

The Prevention / Protection Unit within DFCS includes:

- Facilitation of Prevention Activities, including the Blue Ribbon Campaign during Child Abuse Prevention Month and collaborations throughout the year to promote awareness of ways to report child abuse and neglect, distributing prevention materials, advertisement campaigns targeting safe sleep environments for infants and dangers of leaving children in vehicles;
- Monitoring of CBCAP grant and work of subgrantees;
- Monitoring of CJA grant and work of subgrantee;
- Facilitation of Citizen's Review Panel (CRP);

- Monitoring of CAPTA grant, including Mississippi Centralized Intake program;
- Monitoring of Child and Family Support Services Program (CFSSP) for Family Preservation, Family Reunification, and Family Support under grant for Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF);
- Administration of Children's Trust Fund (CTF) for prevention services;
- Participation on state-level Child Death Review Team (CAPTA);
- Administration of the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC);
- Administration of Fingerprint Program to support criminal background checks to protect children per Adam Walsh Act;
- Administration of the Central Registry program; and
- Other collaborations and initiatives regarding Prevention and Protection as recommended by Child and Family Services Review, Council on Accreditation, and Modified Settlement Agreement (*Olivia Y.*)

Children's Justice Act (CJA) Grant

The Children's Justice Act grant funded one subgrantee during the period of October 1, 2011 to September 30, 2012, Family Resource Center of Northeast Mississippi. The subgrantee concentrated on the provision of Forensic Interviewers and facilitation of Multi-Disciplinary Teams. Family Resource Center of Northeast Mississippi was responsible for providing services to 59 counties in north and central Mississippi. According to the reporting worksheets submitted by Family Resource Center of Northeast Mississippi, there were a total of 240 monthly MDT meetings conducted which resulted in a total of 1,245 cases being reviewed. The Resource Center indicated that there were 15 convictions by trial of felony child abuse and a total of 61 perpetrators entering into plea agreements. Administrative support was provided by the DFCS Prevention/ Protection Unit.

Efforts were made to increase involvement of the Children's Justice Act Task Force. Two new categories, Adult Former Victim of Child Abuse and Neglect and Individual working with Homeless Youth were added to the Task Force with the Governor's approval. Regular updates of agency initiatives were given to the Task Force along with regular updates from the subgrantee.

A three-year assessment was conducted to evaluate the handling of child abuse and neglect cases throughout the system, including DFCS, law enforcement, social workers, and others involved in the investigative process.

Recommendations were made as a result of the three-year assessment from the CJA Task Force and the response from DFCS is included in the Appendix: A.

Plans for the next year will include a Request for Proposal to provide trainings to first responders and the maintenance and facilitation of Multi-Disciplinary Teams across the State. The CJA Task Force will continue to meet quarterly, make recommendations, and plan CJA activities.

Community Based Child Abuse and Prevention Grant (CBCAP)

MDHS/DFCS was designated by the Governor to be the Lead Agency responsible for administering of funds and oversight of programs funded through the Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention grant. MDHS is a state-administered agency headed by Executive Director, Richard A. Berry, who was appointed by Governor Phil Bryant with the advice and consent of the Senate. The Public Assistance laws of Mississippi give the Executive Director the authority to make and publish rules and regulations for the efficient administration of the programs for which MDHS is responsible. MDHS is the primary link between families and the services needed to address their specific needs and delivers a broad range of services to a diverse population in a professional, accurate, and compassionate manner. DFCS serves as the state child welfare agency. Within DFCS, the Prevention Unit is responsible for leading the child abuse prevention efforts within the state and has the responsibility for administration and oversight of the Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) grant.

Through the CBCAP Grant, DFCS provided a subgrant to Starkville School District to provide parenting education for teen parent or expectant parents, temporary and long-term respite care. These services provide much needed support to families who need assistance for child care, parenting education, and referral services.

Starkville School District

During Federal Fiscal Year 2011-2012, MDHS/DFCS, continued to fund a subgrant for respite services, home visitation and parenting classes with Starkville School District.

Starkville School District continued to identify two major needs within their community: parental stress due to childcare responsibility, the need for quality early childhood education and the need for quality interactive time between parents and children. Starkville School District provided respite services for families and early childhood education classes. Each child was encouraged to attend the early childhood classes twice weekly for four hours each visit. During this grant period they are also providing temporary respite care, home visitation using the Prenatal & Birth-5 years Nurturing Parenting curriculum targeting teen parents or expectant parents and parenting classes/support groups utilizing Active Parenting curriculum for forty families with children ages 0-5.

Starkville School District provided respite services to a total of 162 children (133 families) during the funding period for a total of 6710 units (hours) of services for families. In the long term respite program, early childhood classes were provided four days a week from 8:00 a.m. until noon and from 1:00 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. Each child was encouraged to attend twice weekly for a total of eight hours per week. Family Interactive time was offered to families and was planned and conducted by the coordinator of the program. The temporary respite care was offered four mornings a week for up to ten children per morning.

CBCAP Participants

Total Number	Individuals (includes children and adults)	Families	Parents with Disabilities	Comments
Participants in direct services	162	133	43	
Participants who received public awareness/ education (optional)	1760	709	180	
Participants who received training (optional)	1392	916	169	
TOTAL	3314	1758	392	

CBCAP Goals and Objectives for 2013:

Subgrantees will be called upon to provide evaluation data on the outcomes of all programs and/or activities by (1) meeting the PART reporting requirements; (2) providing data to show the percentage of funding that supports evidence-informed (EIP) and/or evidence-based (EBP) programs and practices; (3) providing surveys completed by clients who used the CBCAP services demonstrating their level of satisfaction; and (4) providing evaluation data on the effectiveness of funded programs, the lead agency and the network.

A new Request for Proposal (RFP) was issued in 2012 and two subgrantees were funded. The Starkville School District and Catholic Charities Inc. were awarded contracts for the period of October 1, 2012 through September 30, 2013. Starkville School District continues to provide quality respite services, parenting classes, and home visitation for expectant parents and parents of newborns. Catholic Charities will provide marriage therapy to parents with children under 18 years of age, Prolonged Exposure Therapy or Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing Therapy and/or psychiatric evaluation to uninsured/underinsured adult survivors of abuse/trauma and domestic violence, transportation and interpretation services. Plans are to renew the present contracts with Starkville School District and Catholic Charities as they are providing valuable, quality services.

Blue Ribbon Campaign and other Public Awareness

Mississippi's Governor Phil Bryant was very supportive of the Blue Ribbon Campaign and signed a proclamation recognizing April as Child Abuse Prevention Month as well as recognizing the importance of child abuse and neglect awareness.

The Division of Family and Children's Services, hosted a public awareness event at LeFleur's Bluff State Park on April 28, 2012 to promote healthy, happy families during National Child Abuse Prevention Awareness Month. Other agencies and organizations were on hand to provide information on available programs, services and resources. The event was titled, "Picnic for Prevention" and families were encouraged to come to the park for information, food, entertainment and fun. MDHS/DFCS partnered with the Mississippi Children's Museum, LeFleur's Bluff State Park and the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science. The museums offered discounted admission for event participants. Entertainment was provided by the local school choirs and bands and religious organizations. The Live Out Loud program and a nationally known magician were also featured.

The Division of Family and Children's Services, Prevention Unit, Division of Child Support and the Division Economic Assistance partnered to have a booth in the Trade Mart at the 2011 Mississippi State Fair. Informational literature, pens, hand sanitizers, bracelets, and pencils were also given to the children and adults who visited the booth. Fair attendees were given brochures with parenting tips that had a blue ribbon attached and were asked to display the ribbon on their vehicles to show their support for child abuse prevention. According to the personnel from the State Fair Commission it is estimated that approximately 100,000 people went through the displays in the Trade Mart during the fair. Overall, public opinion was positive and receptive.

The MDHS/DFCS county offices were provided with Blue Ribbon supplies and they partnered with community organizations to hold Blue Ribbon events during the month of April. All subgrantees were required to participate in Blue Ribbon campaign activities.

During April, activities will be held in various communities statewide to promote positive parenting, community involvement, early education and the expansion of state and community-based programs to reduce child abuse and neglect.

Goals for 2013:

The Division of Family and Children's Services plan to continue the Picnic for Prevention event and it hopefully will become an annual collaboration in the community that will benefit the families of Mississippi. We also have plans to continue to distribute child abuse awareness materials and speak with the public about reporting abuse and neglect. Mississippi's efforts to educate our state on issues of abuse and neglect will continue in 2013. We expect to again seek a proclamation from Governor Phil Bryant declaring April as Child Abuse Prevention Month in Mississippi. DFCS will continue to look for new ways and activities to promote Child Abuse Prevention Month in order to draw attention to this cause.

D. Resource Development Unit

For the period of October 1, 2011 and September 30, 2012, the direction changed with the implementation of the Mississippi Child Welfare Practice Model (Practice Model) in various regions of the State of Mississippi. The Resource Development Unit focused on the Practice Model Regions in the order they rolled out, beginning with Regions I-S and II-W.

Resource Development continues to work toward enhancing the service array for our children and families. DFCS' focus for this reporting period was to continue to satisfy the terms of the Settlement Agreement to enhance the percentages of the required physical assessment within 72 hours of coming into foster care and 30 days for the comprehensive physical assessment and all follow-ups required. Mental health assessments required completion within 30 days of entry to foster care for all children four or over to include any recommended follow-ups required. Dental exams for new foster children ages three and older were required within 90 days. Each of these requirements is per American Academy of Pediatrics as well as ACYF-CB-PI-11-06, issued April 28, 2011 for Health Care Services of P.L. 110-351 that require States to develop a plan for ongoing oversight and coordination of health care services for children in foster care. MDHS/DFCS partnered with Magnolia Health Plan managed care through Division of Medicaid, Mississippi Coordinated Access Network to provide services in the areas of physical, dental and mental health.

The Resource Directory was completed on schedule in January 2012. This directory lists by county all of the resources available. The directory is posted on the MDHS/DFCS Connection website for staff, families, children, caregivers or any other person seeking resources statewide. It is updated on an as needed basis.

The Resource Development Unit began the development of the Interpreter Program in April 2011. During this time the program has grown and developed quite a bit. From October 2011 until September 2012 the Interpreters of DFCS have been a part of many county meetings that include the counties ASWS, FPS and Regional Directors as well as taken part in community activities within and outside of MDHS.

December 2011 Laura Rivera was promoted to the position of Projects Officer IV, Special or Interpreter Program Supervisor. In February 2012 Resource Development welcomed a new Spanish speaking interpreter, Allison Bowie who is housed in State Office. This allows our interpreter team to grow and better assist all the counties within the state of Mississippi.

The interpreter program has been very involved with many different state agencies, private organizations and stake holders. In 2011 and 2012 the interpreter unit was able to attend the LGBT Conference and INFusion Conference in Jackson. This allowed us to create lasting contacts within the LGBT community and to recognize available resources to our youth in care. We also participated and set up booths with handouts and informational packets on the prevention of child abuse and neglect in Spanish during the Mental Health Awareness Day and Picnic for Prevention. The interpreters were also involved in the preparation for the annual

NASW conference as well as preparing, attending and conducting workshops for conference attendees.

Our interpreter unit has not only assisted other agencies throughout the state, we have also worked closely with other divisions of MDHS. During the disaster relief for Hurricane Isaac the entire DFCS interpreter staff assisted Harrison County MDHS, Economic Assistance, in all interpreting needs for affected Spanish speaking people in the area. We have also translated documents and interpreted phone calls for the MDHS Adoption Unit.

This unit not only serves the needs of all LEP clients for interpretation/translation needs, but also advocates for clients, as well as collaborates with local community leaders, universities and others to better provide services to LEP clients. DFCS collaborates with community partners such as local hospitals, The Office on Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Catholic Charities and The Latin American Business Association (LABA Link) in order to improve LEP community resources.

The Resource Development Unit as of June 2012 hired an Educational Liaison to provide training, assistance with obtaining educational services and intervening with school districts to seek services for our foster children. Based on federal requirements we are responsible for services to be provided for our children. The Educational Liaison is responsible for training our field staff on the following:

- Caseworkers shall review the educational record of each child who enters custody for the purpose of identifying the child's general and, if applicable, special educational needs and shall document the child's educational needs within 30 calendar days of his/her entry into foster care.
- Caseworkers are to take reasonable steps to ensure that school-age foster children are registered for and attending accredited schools within three business days of initial placement or any placement change, including while placed in shelters or other temporary placements.
- Reasonable efforts are to be made to ensure the continuity of a child's educational experience by keeping the child in a familiar or current school and neighborhood, when this is in the child's best interests and feasible, and by limiting the number of school changes the child experiences.

The Educational Liaison is providing training to each region per the Practice Model Rollout. Information stated above as well as training on Individual Educational Plan (IEP) and Individual Disability Education Act (IDEA) to better inform our field workers makes up the training curriculum.

E. Policy Unit

The Policy Unit was created to coordinate revision of all sections of the DFCS Policy Manual and to ensure the existence and consistency of a current and adequate DFCS policy manual.

This Unit also ensures that DFCS policy addresses necessary federal and state mandates along with the safety, permanency and well-being of children through the outlining of a strong Family Centered Practice Policy.

Inclusion of the principles and practices of the *Olivia Y.* Settlement Agreement, Council on Accreditation standards, and the Practice Model are essential in creating a revised policy. The Policy Unit is required to make the Manual available to all staff via the DFCS Connection Web, as well as issue Bulletins of changes in policy in the interim while sections are in the process of revision.

Since the inception of the Policy Unit in August 2009, all sections of DFCS policy have been revised have been released to the DFCS Connection Web as permanent policy.

The goals of the Policy Unit are to meet the requirements of federal and state mandates, the *Olivia Y.* Settlement Agreement, Council on Accreditation standards, and the Practice Model for policy revisions.

F. Eligibility Unit

The Eligibility Unit ensures the availability and accessibility of effective, culturally competent services through education, training, innovation, monitoring and promotion of ongoing quality improvement and utilization of all areas of Title IV-E eligibility. DFCS provides individual entitlement for qualified children, partnership with universities to build social worker workforce, and maximizes potential strategies to increase state and federal funding in support of Title IV-E.

The Eligibility Unit completed and passed the Program Improvement Plan in August, 2010, along with revising and finalizing the State Plan for Title IV-E of the Social Security Act Foster Care and Adoption Assistance for the State of Mississippi. The secondary review of Mississippi's Title IV-E Foster Care Program was conducted in June, 2011. MDHS' Title IV-E foster care program was in substantial compliance with Federal eligibility requirement for the Period Under Review (PUR). The next primary review will be held within three years.

The Eligibility Unit continues to ensure and implement existing services and newly created services to utilize for qualified children throughout the State of Mississippi. The Eligibility Unit assists courts throughout the State of Mississippi in achieving prompt permanency hearings, as well as continuing discussions with county judges concerning requirements of IV-E eligibility.

The Eligibility Unit coordinates revisions with the Policy Unit concerning procedures within the unit required by the *Olivia Y.* Settlement Agreement. The Eligibility Unit implements various strategies and proposed principles for funding, which outline short and long term actions that build and utilize vital services to support Title IV-E.

A Division Director of Eligibility was hired September, 2009. The Eligibility Unit was created in 2009 to ensure quality results pertaining to administrating the eligibility payment program. Staff provides support by interpreting DFCS eligibility policies and procedures to determine initial and ongoing eligibility payments within the Eligibility Unit. Unit Staff review payment requests, determine payments, check Medicaid determination, communicate with the field workers, county offices, and facilitate solutions for over and underpayments. Unit Staff are responsible for setting up new case files as well as preparing, generating, and composing correspondence to ensure accuracy of all documentation in individual case files.

2010-2014 CFSP Goals for the Eligibility Unit

- Provide individual entitlement for qualified children and maximize potential strategies to increase funding.
- Complete Program Improvement Plan (PIP).
- Complete State IV-E Plan.
- Maximize funding of retroactive claims through verification of permanency orders and court orders.
- Develop better communication skills/tools with all counties in the State of Mississippi.
- Meet with judges throughout the state to discuss importance of Title IV-E.
- Develop tracking system for documentation needed for each case file.
- Work with MACWIS to increase efficiency within the system pertaining to eligibility.
- Hire staff.

Progress on 2010-2014 CFSP Goals

- State IV-E Plan was sent for approval April 12, 2012.
- IV-E training continues in all counties via telephonic conferences and on-the-job phone training.
- Retroactive claims continue due to permanency order completion and verification.
- Daily, weekly, and monthly pending spreadsheets of pending case file missing documentation are sent via email to all counties to increase efficiency and timeliness in obtaining documentation.
- Developed and distributed initial eligibility checklist to all counties for daily implementation to be filed with each case file.
- Copies of licensed homes are sent to the eligibility unit for tracking purposes and filed.
- Copies of fingerprinting and background checks are sent to the eligibility unit for tracking purposes and filed.
- Meeting with judges throughout the state continue to increase IV-E understanding.
- Quarterly eligibility tip sheet and Eligibility Unit procedures are sent throughout the state outlining criteria for IV-E eligibility.
- Eligibility hired additional staff to accommodate case load of the eligibility unit.
- Systematic review of case files continues via DFCS staff.

- Access was approved for the Eligibility Unit to use the Mississippi Youth Court Information Data System (MYCIDS) to print copies of court orders. MYCIDS assist the courts in meeting their timeframes according to Mississippi Statutes for child welfare.
- Worked with Division of Field Operations, Claims Unit, in 2012, researching over payments and underpayments.

Court Orders

The Uniform Court Orders are now hyperlinked to the Mississippi Supreme Court website, <http://www.mssc.state.ms.us/>. Children’s Bureau Regional Staff approved the language of the orders regarding (1) probable cause (2) the child remaining in the home would be “contrary to the welfare” and (3) removal from the home is “in the best interest” of the child. Further, the pertinent orders contain the “reasonable efforts” to prevent removal or “reasonable efforts are not required” and exceptions for reasonable efforts are listed so the correct exception can be checked by the judge.

A MYCIDS software program was added in the Eligibility Unit to access and print court orders from counties throughout the state which are using MYCIDS effectively.

Licensing and Safety

- Licensing and Safety training was completed in December 2011, which was presented by the training coordinators and regional ASWS, with emphasis on aspects of IV-E requirements and policy concerning licensing and safety. New workers receive training in Child Welfare Professional Development workshops regarding not placing children in unlicensed or unapproved homes. The following procedures are outlined as follows: The field worker enters a placement correction in MACWIS. This placement correction is sent to the eligibility worker’s tickler for correction. If the correction cannot be made by eligibility for a specific reason, then eligibility contacts the worker. When the home is fully licensed, a copy of that license is sent to the eligibility unit and filed.

As of August 2012, according to the MWCURST2 Listing of Children with Eligibility Status Report, dated September 15, 2012 the total number of IV-E and CWS children is as follows:

Eligibility Status	Totals
IV-E	1,261
CWS	2,169
Children in custody	3,828

Some of the reasons why there are more children eligible for CWS than IV-E are as follows:

- Court orders do not contain the appropriate language for IV-E eligibility.
- Excess or no income verification.

- Non-home removals.
- Non-relative removals from home.

Progress after September 30, 2012

- A new Division Director was hired in the Eligibility Unit.
- Eligibility Clerks were hired in 10 Regions which will assist the Eligibility Unit in obtaining crucial information and documentation from the county workers to determine IVE/CWS eligibility.
- Eligibility workers in the state office now have access to Interwoven/Worksite in order to obtain verification of birth and social security cards.

G. Administration Unit

The Administration Unit is responsible for DFCS personnel transactions; property inventory; requisitions for equipment and supplies; space planning for staff increases, subgrants; performance-based contracts; reports to the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Children's Bureau regarding Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP), Child and Family Services Review (CFSR), Annual Progress Services Report (APSR), Program Improvement Plan(s) (PIP), collaboration with the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians and Indian Child Welfare Act Training for the judiciary, collaboration with the Administrative Office of Courts for training DFCS staff and judiciary; Council on Accreditation (COA) Risk Management Prevention (RPM) Standards and drafts responses and formal plans required by the *Olivia Y. Modified Settlement Agreement (MSA)*.

Performance Based Contracting was piloted in the Fall of 2012 with the issuances of requests for proposals for emergency shelters and regular group homes. Initially, five contracts for emergency shelters and four regular group homes were awarded effective January 1, 2013. Performance Based Contracting Goals:

- Providers have clear accountability for results;
- DHS establishes a partnership dialogue with providers;
- Focus on outcomes and generate those outcomes;
- Clearly defined monitoring procedures to produce successful outcomes for children;
- Accurate data reporting;
- Continued and frequent feedback from providers regarding services to children;
- Ongoing updates and communication regarding services for children; and
- Goal of permanency for children.

H. Budget & Financial Planning Unit

The Budget and Financial Planning Unit is responsible for the following:

- Safeguarding the financial interests of DFCS through its coordination with the Agency's grants management, monitoring of county bank accounts, comprehension and implementation of budgetary authority available to DFCS;

- Mediating communications through other Divisions of the Agency and federal partners to support DFCS' mission;
- Coordinating with Federal and State Agencies to ensure compliance with applicable laws and regulations in regard to Federal and State funding;
- Supporting the Division in meeting all Public Agency Financial Management standards outlined in the Council on Accreditation standards; and
- Assisting the Division in complying with all deliverables set forth in the *Olivia Y. Mississippi Modified Settlement Agreement and Reform Plan, Agreement Regarding Enhancement of Federal Funding.*

A recent financial assessment conducted by the Center for the Support of Families, Inc. has resulted in the need for the Division of Budgets & Accounting to update the DFCS Cost Allocation Plan to include those components necessary to enhance the State's Title IV-E and Title IV-B federal funding.

- As part of DFCS' objective to maximize federal funding, DFCS has implemented a claiming process for the portion of pre-service training, tuition reimbursements and university Master of Social Worker (MSW) cohort expenses eligible to recoup Title IV-E funds. DFCS will utilize General (State) Funds to pay expenses initially and submit quarterly claims to recoup Title IV-E training funds based on whether the course content is eligible for the 75/25 or 50/50 match rate, analysis of the DFCS workload summary to appropriately allocate costs to all benefiting programs, utilization of the Title IV-E penetration rate and submit claims for the portion of the expenses that are Title IV-E reimbursable.
- DFCS allocates costs for the Professional Development Unit to Title IV-E through the utilization of cost pools. This unit has increased staff to provide training coordinators to support the 13 regions within the division for the development and delivery of training. Personnel expenditures and other related costs are being charged to the Social Services Training cost pool (P151). DFCS utilizes the Foster Care Training cost pool (P174) for all training related to foster care and the Adoption Training cost pool (P176) for all training related to adoption. This includes reimbursements made to foster and adoptive families for expenses associated with training participation.
- The Division of Budgets & Accounting prepares quarterly claims for support service expenses such as clothing, school supplies or unmet personal needs provided by DFCS to those children in foster care who are Title IV-E eligible. DFCS utilizes an automated process to match the eligibility status of children in out-of-home care to payment files of support services, identifying payments eligible for reimbursement under Title IV-E, i.e., those related to the maintenance of children in care.
- The Agency has enhanced its Random Moment Sampling process by utilizing an automated system and providing the necessary training to those employees within DFCS who participate in the sampling.
- As part of the objective to maximize federal funding, DFCS has revised the definitions used in its Random Moment Sampling to separate activities that are Title IV-E

reimbursable when applied to eligible children from those that are not, so that staff time can be allocated appropriately.

In addition to the above services and programs, DFCS has allocated the following on-going administrative services to the Title IV-E program:

- The process of becoming an accredited child welfare agency;
- Implementation of the financial assessment for the maximization of federal funding; and
- Implementation of the Child Welfare Practice Model statewide for family centered practice.

Goals:

- Identify spending trends and utilization patterns for all segments of DFCS.
Strategies:
 - Determine and track utilization and cost of services for all programs and/or units.
 - Identify utilization patterns and expenditures associated with high costs and/or poor outcomes.
 - Develop a data system for ongoing tracking of utilization and expenditures for services and supports.Outcomes:
 - Knowledge of how much each program and/or unit is spending on services and supports for children and families.
 - Protection of the amount and types of services and supports that children and families will use in the future.
 - Protection of how much each program and/or unit will potentially spend for these services and supports.
- Realignment of funding streams and structures.
Strategies:
 - Maximize federal entitlement funding.
 - Utilize Title IV-E funds to support eligible professional development costs at the enhanced training rate.
 - Utilize Title IV-E funds to support eligible administrative costs associated with professional development and training needs.
 - Utilize Title IV-E funds to support eligible on-going training needs of staff.
 - Utilize Title IV-B Subpart II and Title IV-E funds to provide eligible support services to children and families within their communities.
 - Utilize Title IV-B Subpart I, Child Welfare Services (CWS) and Title IV-E funds as applicable to fund foster care board payments for room/board and watchful oversight; including up to 10% for DFCS administrative costs associated with foster care payments.

- Utilize Title IV-B Subpart II, Monthly Caseworker Visit (MCV) funds to provide Intensive Supervisory Support to social work supervisors and practice coaching to social workers in an effort to improve the quality and timeliness of social worker visits with children and families in accordance with the implementation of Mississippi's Child Welfare Practice Model.
- Utilize Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) funds for a fraction of those costs associated with the Mississippi Central Intake Program (MCIP) and provide a full-time DFCS attorney responsible for reviewing maltreatment cases for legal sufficiency prior to presentation in court.
- Utilize Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) funds to assist adolescents in acquiring basic life skills in their progress from dependency toward self-sufficiency. These funds may be utilized to assist program recipients with rent for an apartment for youth in foster care that have attained age 18 and meet the program requirements.
- Utilize Educational and Training Voucher (ETV) funds to meet the education and training needs of youth aging out of the foster care system that are enrolled in the Independent Living Program (ILP). Eligibility for the program requires participants to be enrolled in an Institution of higher Learning in order to receive up to \$5,000 of financial assistance each year.

Outcomes:

- o Maximize the use of diverse funding;
 - o Increase flexibility of funding sources and budget structures;
 - o Coordination of funding across programs to ensure appropriate and integrated services.
- Financing for accountability
 - Strategies:
 - o Incorporate utilization and cost management mechanisms.
 - Make sure that timely and accurate service utilization and cost data are available and used for making fiscal and financial decisions.
 - Total cost of child welfare services;
 - Costs of services by children and/or families served; and
 - Utilization of costs by case types.

Outcomes:

- o Service utilization and child welfare costs are monitored and managed.

VI. TRIBAL CONSULTATION

General Protocol for Collaboration with the Tribes

The Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS), Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) and the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians (MBCI) made great progress in achieving the cooperative goals during the reporting period. DFCS has always maintained a

collaborative relationship with the MBCI. DFCS continues to offer assistance to the Tribe in such areas as Independent Living services, foster care and adoption services

The tribes of affiliation, as well as Indian parents, are notified any time DFCS is involved with a child or family that meets tribal membership requirements. The Choctaw tribe is available to assist the Division of Family and Children's Services with tribal identification and notification as needed. DFCS and Choctaw Social Services made cooperative efforts to identify potential Native American resource parents. Two potential families were identified but declined to pursue licensing.

Active case planning is pursued to maintain or reunite Native American families as soon as safely feasible when safety concerns are identified. Choctaw Social Service's staff attended trainings on Division of Family and Children's Services Practice Model Implementation, Maltreatment Training, Conducting Family Team Meetings and Safety and Risks Assessment tools. DFCS staff participated in tribal training on the Adam Walsh Act. Tribal Youth Court Judge Briscoe has been actively involved with DFCS and attended the Permanency Summit with DFCS staff in November 2010. DFCS had extensive participation at the Indian Child Welfare Act Training on June 10, 2011 on the MBCI Reservation. Judge Briscoe was appointed as the Chief Justice for the MBCI. A new youth court judge has been appointed.

The tribe is notified of any state proceedings involving tribal children and given the opportunity to assume jurisdiction or authority at any point in the proceedings.

Cross Training between the Tribe and DFCS

Training on the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) continues to be included in the Child Welfare Professional Development curriculum and new curriculum being developed that is required for all new DFCS social workers and support staff. In addition, the State of Mississippi is in the process of trying to improve collaboration with the Mississippi Band of Choctaws' Social Services in coordinating protective service cases related to children of Choctaw families who are not covered or eligible for services through the Mississippi Band of Choctaws or their Social Services.

DFCS will continue to maintain a working relationship with the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians Social Services on the local level and take every opportunity to expand that relationship into a statewide collaboration.

As of April 2012, the ICWA Narrative Contact Needed and Families with Native Heritage report in MACWIS indicates that of the 1,908 open cases, 1,425 show ICWA contact was made and 988 show no ICWA contact was made. The percentage of ICWA contact statewide is 74.68%. [Report MWZICW2S – ICWA Narrative Contact Needed & Families with Native Heritage]

Progress in Achieving CFSP Goals

Representatives from the Tribes in Mississippi participated in the Child and Families Services Plan at a Five Year Strategic Planning Conference in February 2009 and outlined collaborative efforts for the future. Representatives also participated in the Child and Families Services Review training for review of case records in July 2009. The Tribe's Social Services Director, Mae Bell, Sam Valentine and three other tribal senior staff participated in the CFSR interview in May 2010.

Tribal representatives participated with federal and state reviewers during the Child and Family Services Review, May 17, 2010. Tribal Representatives with whom Mississippi has consulted include Maurice Calistro, Director, Human Resources; Tina Scott, Assistant Director of Human Resources; Mae Bell, Manager of Family and Children's Services; Pam Johnson, Supervisor of Child Welfare Workers; and Sam Valentine, Coordinator of Policy, Planning and Compliance. Plans are underway for the Tribal and DFCS yearly meeting to discuss practice procedures between the DFCS and Choctaw social service staff. As many front line workers as possible will participate and the program will include some relationship building elements in the meeting.

The Choctaw social service staff requested to participate in any training conducted by DFCS. They were invited to attend the Maltreatment and Safety Training. Two participants attended the training on August 10, 2010. Tribal social service staff will be provided information regarding future training opportunities. In the Fall-Winter of 2010-2011, the Tribes and DFCS participated in cross-training events presented by DFCS regarding Quality Visits; Permanency Roundtables presented by the Casey Family Programs; cross-training organized by the Tribe in conjunction with Comprehensive Approaches to Sex Offender Management (CASOM) and DFCS ongoing training.

Sam Valentine met with Atlantic Coast Child Welfare Implementation Center (ACCWIC) representatives in August 2010 to discuss a collaborative effort to conduct targeted recruitment of Choctaw Foster Families "off reservation" in conjunction with recruitment efforts the Tribal social services plans to conduct in Choctaw churches.

In February 2011, representatives of the Youth Court Judges, Administrative Office of Courts, Division of Family and Children's Center and the Choctaw Model Court met with the Tribal leader and requested permission to hold a training event on Tribal land regarding the Indian Child Welfare Act. A cross-training for the Tribe, judiciary and DFCS was developed with the full cooperation of the Tribal leader.

Memorandum of Understanding Achieved

Following the first ICWA conference, on June 22, 2011, negotiations reopened toward a Memorandum of Understanding between the MBCI and DFCS. Representatives from the MBCI judiciary, Tribal Attorney General's Office and DFCS drafted the Memorandum and presented it to the Tribal Counsel April 10, 2012. The MOU was signed October 25, 2012.

First Indian Child Welfare Act Conference in Mississippi

On June 9-10, 2011, the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, in collaboration with the Choctaw Model Court, Forrest County Model Court, The Mississippi Judicial College, Administrative Office of Courts and DFCS Court Improvement Workgroup, hosted the first Indian Child Welfare Act Conference at the Pearl River Resort in Choctaw, MS. Technical assistance was requested from the National Resource Center for Tribes, National Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues, and the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. The Tribe presented opening ceremonies with a history of the Tribe, the customs, dance, music, drums, dress and culture. The keynote speaker was Margaret Burt, Attorney, and member of the National Resource Centers listed above. The *United States v. John* and the landmark U. S. Supreme Court *Holyfield* cases were revisited with an original litigator presenting and an update on the children's lives provided. It is anticipated that this conference will become an annual collaboration between the Tribes, the Mississippi judiciary and DFCS. The conference was well attended by approximately 160 Tribal representatives, including members of the Tribal Council, Tribal Courts, Attorney General's Office and Social Services, State Judicial and other court personnel, as well as representatives from the DFCS. Tribal representation from several states and Casey Family Programs also attended.

Participants, both tribal and legal, from at least ten states other than Mississippi, participated in the ICWA Conference: Nevada, California, New Mexico, Washington, Oregon, Minnesota, Iowa and Texas. The Pechanga Tribe from Temecula, California attended. Representatives from the Casey Organization, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, the NRC for Tribes, the NRC for Legal and Judicial, the Department of Education, the Judiciary, including Chancery Judges, County Court Judges, Youth Court Judges and Referees, Prosecutors, Youth Court Defenders, Youth Court Counselors, Guardians *ad litem*, Attorney General's Office, Tribal Attorney General's Office, Office of Administrative Courts and individual attorneys, the Executive Director of the Mississippi Department of Human Services, the Deputy Administrator of Family and Children's Services, Director of Field Operations, DFCS Social Workers, the Director of MBCI Department of Family and Community Services and MBCI Social Services staff were in attendance.

Second Indian Child Welfare Act Conference in Mississippi

The second ICWA Conference, "Pathways to Justice" was held May 31-June 1, 2012, hosted by the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians at the Golden Moon Pearl River Resort in Choctaw, Mississippi, with approximately 200 participants. Tribal nation representatives from throughout the United States attended this historic conference including: the Alabama Coushatta Tribe of Texas, the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma, the Blackfeet of Montana, Pomo of California, the Coast Miwok of California, the Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma, White Earth Indians of Minnesota, Lakota Indians of North and/or South Dakota, Tlingit Indians of the Pacific Northwest, Yaqui Indians of Arizona, Oueaha Indians of Nebraska, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians.

Third Indian Child Welfare Act Conference in Mississippi

The third ICW Conference is scheduled for August 14-16, 2013 at the Golden Moon Pearl River Resort in Choctaw, Mississippi.

VII. HEALTH CARE SERVICES PLAN

The Health Care Services Plan has been updated and is provided as Appendix: B.

VIII. DISASTER PLANS

The mission of the Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS) is to provide services for people in need by optimizing all available resources to sustain the family unit and to encourage traditional family values thereby promoting self-sufficiency and personal responsibility for all Mississippians. The Division of Family and Children's Services (DFCS) has a duty to protect vulnerable children from abuse, neglect and exploitation; to support family preservation and community living; and to prevent family violence and disruption.

Disasters can affect the way our agency operates and the services we provide for children and their families. The Disaster Plan, while specific to Mississippi, may be expanded and impacted by State and Federal mandates during disasters that have wide reaching implications which may be beyond our standard scope of operations. The purpose for this plan is to establish certain operational procedures and guidelines which will facilitate the execution of the DFCS staff's essential mission functions during various emergency situations such as natural disasters, accidents, technological emergencies and military or terrorist related incidents. The plan was put in place so that workers in affected areas can have a primary contact to obtain information on foster children and parents. All DFCS staff are on call during a disaster to provide any assistance to social workers or foster parents who may call to get information. Implementing the plan has alleviated stress for many in trying to locate children and parents in the event of another natural disaster.

The most common natural disasters that afflict our state include: Hurricanes, Tropical Storms, Severe Electrical Storms, Tornadoes, High Winds, Flash Flooding, and Winter Storms. Other disasters are manmade, such as: Hazardous Material incidents (chemical, biological, radiological), Technological (electrical power blackouts, computer system and network disruptions, electronic equipment breakdown) and Terrorist Attacks. In the event of a disaster, the Division Director is in charge of the execution of the Disaster Plan. Alternates include, Deputy Director, Director of Field Operations, and Unit Directors as designated by the Division Director.

As a result of hard lessons learned during 2005's Hurricane Katrina, DFCS was well prepared for Hurricane Gustav in 2008. The MDHS/DFCS locations, staff and clients took a significant beating from Katrina. The effects of Katrina were so catastrophic that even operating under a perfect system, DFCS would have had difficulty recovering. Hurricane Gustav, which occurred

in September of 2008, proved that this disaster plan was effective and as soon as notification of the hurricane was received, action was taken.

The MDHS Disaster Preparedness Plan was implemented in full force following Hurricane Katrina and remains in force in 2011. Cooperative efforts continue with FEMA (which involves federal, national, state, local and DFCS collaboration in preparation for and responding to disasters and assisting repatriates), for which DFCS received the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) - Hurricane Katrina Award and the SSBG-Disaster Award. These funds are used for restoration purposes in the southern portion of the state and for the Mississippi Central Intake. DFCS coordinates with the Department of Homeland Security/Emergency Preparedness and Response/Federal Emergency Management Agency regarding preparation for disasters and response when a disaster occurs.

See: Appendix: C, and also, <http://www.msema.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/BasicPlan.pdf>

Effects of Disasters October 2011 to September 2012

Hurricane Isaac began on August 26, 2012, moving at a slow pace which caused increased flooding in Mississippi extending into October 2012. The following counties in Mississippi were declared disaster areas: Adams, Amite, Clarke, Copiah, Forrest, Franklin, George, Hinds, Jefferson, Jones, Lamar, Lincoln, Marion, Pike, Stone, Walthall, Warren and Wilkinson counties.

On October 19-20, 2012, multiple tornadoes occurred in Mississippi causing injury to persons and damage to property, including schools.

Mississippi Emergency Repatriation Plan

DFCS developed the Mississippi Emergency Repatriation Plan, which is an Attachment to Emergency Support Function #6, Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan in effect since March 27, 2009 between local, state, national and federal organizations and agencies. Governor Phil Bryant approved and signed the new Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) for disaster operations within Mississippi in 2012. The updated plan and its numerous Emergency Support Functions (ESFs), and annexes can be found on the MEMA website at <http://www.msema.org/plans/comp.html>. MDHS is responsible for ESF 6.

Implementation of the Disaster Plan October 1, 2010 – September 30, 2011, Revised 2012

During the year, and particularly during the peak times for heavy rainfall, tornadoes, hurricanes or other common disasters, MDHS/DFCS implements the Disaster Plan by requiring each supervisor to review emergency operations procedures for areas of responsibility. Employee emergency contact information is updated and forwarded to the Division Directors and other persons on the disaster team as necessary. Supervisors are instructed to review responsibilities and discuss how communication takes place during a disaster when regular means of communication are not operable. DFCS Field staff are instructed to talk with staff, resource families, birth parents and other clients about being properly prepared if there is

- Regions III-N, V-E, VII-E Beginning July 2013
- Regions II-E, VI, VII-W Beginning July 2013

A preliminary evaluation design was developed by the Project Evaluator during the reporting period. The development of the evaluation design (pre-post and matched comparison group) took into consideration the project approach/key activities, readiness factors, and plans for program implementation as provided by project staff. Evaluation training was provided to the regions via teleconference during this reporting period.

Update:

During this reporting period, the grant leadership team and staff continued to transition regions from the planning phase to the implementation phase. Each of the four initial roll out regions completed written recruitment plans during this period. Implementation of grant activities outlined in regional recruitment plans became the primary focus of the grant team. The grant team spent time developing and/or securing recruitment tools (such as posters, business cards, talking points, etc.) needed for plan implementation.

The grant leadership team continued to have bi-weekly calls during this reporting period. Regular communication among the team members has proven to be beneficial to the continued success of the project. Topics such as activities updates, next steps and regional successes/challenges were regularly addressed during the calls.

Recruitment Support Specialists continued to collect completed resource family applicant intake forms from the regions on a monthly basis. The forms were then reviewed to ensure they had been completed properly. Resource workers were notified of any missing or incomplete information. This process has helped ensure all potential applicants are tracked throughout the application and licensure process and all qualified applicants have access to the home study process.

During the previous reporting period a case-record review instrument was developed and refined for collecting pre- and post-project data relevant to measuring expected outcomes. A Recruitment Support Specialist was assigned the task of performing case reviews utilizing the MACWIS system and the newly developed review instrument. The completed instruments are sent to the grant evaluator on a regular basis for tracking purposes.

The major project tasks during this reporting period included implementation in Regions 1-South and 2-West, planning and implementation in Regions 4-North and 5-West, case reviews/data collection, and multiple conference presentations (dissemination). Grant activities continued with a high level of momentum during this reporting period. A variety of activities were completed as the grant team fully engaged in implementation of concrete tasks and the development of materials.



X. MONTHLY CASEWORKER VISIT DATA AND STATE PLAN REQUIREMENTS

Since the FY 2007 baseline for this mandate was established, the Children's Bureau has given DFCS clarification on the detailed data that is required in order to receive the funding associated with this measure. DFCS re-established the FY2007 baseline data and develops new benchmarks for each reporting year. (See [Appendix: D](#))

DFCS continues to look at various options to utilize the available IV-B Subpart 2 funding, recognizing that the quality of front-line staff, worker turnover, high caseloads, overwhelming administrative burdens, lack of supervisory support and the minimal level of knowledge and experience of staff are some of the challenges of public child welfare staff recruitment and staff retention that can affect children's safety and permanency. Systemic improvement, such as accreditation and the enhancement of supervisory training and supports are expected to lessen worker stress by improving the working environment. The Accreditation process has facilitated high-quality service delivery because it requires reasonable caseloads and reduces the number of staff a supervisor must oversee. Supervisory training that focuses on leadership skills and clinical practices will help in improving communication and decision making.

MACWIS allows for tracking the caseworker visits with the child. The criteria for this contact to be counted are:

- Any assigned worker responsible for the child (either from the county of jurisdiction or the county of service) must be the same person who made the visit; and
- At least one visit must have occurred in the child's placement setting.

All children who are in DFCS custody for the entire report month are included in the reporting population.

The DFCS direct service worker shall maintain monthly face-to-face contact in the placement setting with every child in custody. Monthly contact means at least once every calendar month and includes the documentation in MACWIS as soon after the visit as possible.

DFCS Policy as of 2010 required that the worker visit the child at least two times per month. One visit must be made within the placement setting to assess the continuing appropriateness of the placement. Visiting with the child outside the placement setting is suggested in order to allow the child to freely express his/her feelings about the placement.

The DFCS policy as of July 2011 required: The County of Responsibility (COR) worker must maintain twice monthly face-to-face contact with all foster children placed in the COR County. This meeting should be in person and, where age appropriate, alone to assess the child's safety, well-being, service delivery, adjustment to placement and achievement of permanency and other service goals. This assessment of the child's adjustment to the placement should be on-going and the need for more frequent visits by the Worker should be documented. At least one of the monthly visits must be in the placement setting.

If a foster child remains in Mississippi, but is placed outside the COR, the County of Service (COS) Worker is responsible for making the monthly face-to-face visits with the child, beginning the calendar month after the child is placed (the COR Worker will see the child in the placement month). The COR Worker will also visit the child quarterly in the placement setting. All visits will be documented on the narrative screen in MACWIS within 5 working days after the visit.

If a foster child remains in Mississippi, but is placed outside the County of Responsibility (COR), it is the responsibility of the County of Service (COS) to make the monthly face-to-face visits with the child, beginning with the month after the child is placed. The COR worker will see the child in the placement month. The COR worker will also visit the child quarterly within the placement setting. All visits shall be documented in MACWIS on the narrative screen as soon as possible after the visit, but at least by the end of the calendar month in which the visit was made.

DFCS requests that all children placed through ICPC in another state receive contacts at a minimum of once a month in the placement setting. It is also the expectation of DFCS staff to have contact with children placed through ICPC in Mississippi to be seen according to policy for Mississippi children.

In the cases where special circumstances exist, including, but not limited to, children with ICPC placements or children who are on runaway status, an explanation must be documented in the narratives as to why contact was not possible. Children in custody, who are placed out of state in facilities or with relatives and are not being seen by the receiving state staff, should be seen once every six months by Mississippi DFCS staff. More frequent contact may be required at the discretion of the ASWS.

Some children may be in care in Mississippi, but their parents or primary caretakers have moved out of state. Even if Mississippi has requested that the state of residence work with the parents, the Mississippi direct service worker must continue to maintain bi-monthly face-to-face contact with the child. A report on such visits is submitted to the child welfare agency of the state where the child's parents are located so the state of residence may be able to share with the parents the child's safety and well-being.

Mississippi's new baseline data is as follows:

Baseline Year	Total Children in Out of Home Care	Face-to-Face Contact	Contact in Placement Setting
2007	4,923	65.02%	53.32%

The baseline data was re-established after reviewing the Children’s Bureau detailed explanation of how to calculate this data. A monthly report is run with detailed information on the children who were/were not visited that keeps the ASWSs, direct service workers and the Continuous Quality Improvement Unit apprised of the progress being made toward meeting this goal. An annual report has been developed to give DFCS the exact details of this item as mandated by the Children’s Bureau calculations.

In order to establish benchmark data for face-to-face contacts each fiscal year, DFCS projects a 6.25% increase in each fiscal year. The new benchmark data for face-to-face contact in the placement setting will be increased by .5% each year. These calculations as established by DFCS are as follows:

Reporting Year	Projected Face-to-Face Contact	Projected Contact in Placement Setting
2008	71.27%	53.82%
2009	77.52%	54.32%
2010	83.77%	54.82%
2011	90.00%	55.32%
2012	90.00%	58.08%

DFCS FY 2012 Worker/Child Contact is as follows:

Reporting Year	Face-to-Face Contact	Contact in Placement Setting
2008	73.55%	67.59%
2009	77.29%	87.49%
2010	80.96%	92.27%
2011	74.06%	92.52%
2012	77.16%	90.27%

Plan to Achieve 90 Percent for FYS 2012 and 2013

Action steps to ensure that the total number of monthly caseworker visits to children in foster care is not less than 90 percent of the total visits that would be made if each child were visited once per month for FYS 2012 and 2013:

Mississippi is required by the *Olivia Y.* Settlement Agreement to make two caseworker visits with child, with one visit in the placement, and the visit must be made by the assigned worker, which exceeds the federal requirement above. In order to reach this requirement, the following actions steps are in place and become part of the Regional Action Plan in the Regions where the Mississippi Child Welfare Practice Model has rolled out. Three additional Regions are rolling out the Practice Model in 2012, for a total of 10 out of 13 regions, and have the benefit of the lessons learned in the other Regions.

The Regions meeting or exceeding 90 percent have implemented the following actions:

- Review MACWIS reports at monthly regional staff meetings;
- Utilize Foster Care Review (FCR) reports and Evaluation and Monitoring (EMU) reports to identify areas within each region where improvement efforts are needed (overall and case-specific) with regard to the frequency and the quality of caseworker visits with children;
- Utilize the Regional CQI-Sub Teams and the State Level CQI Sub-Team in identifying, addressing areas needing improvement, and developing action plans surrounding the area of caseworker visits with children in foster care as well as in-home services cases (Protection and Prevention).
- Utilize and adhere to the corrective action process for specific children identified during case reviews (FCR and EMU) in which they are reported to have not had face-to-face contact with their caseworker and/or any representative from the DFCS as required by agency policy.
- ASWSs justify any discrepancies before their peers;
- ASWSs hold workers accountable to make the contacts and check progress by the 25th to see that they are made (which allows time to make the monthly visit and capture information on the monthly MACWIS report).
- Discover data entry errors which appear to be a missing contact i.e. such as not putting the child's name in the participant box.
- When staff is short and tasks must be prioritize, foster child contacts take top priority.
- Require the assigned COR (County of Responsibility) worker to make the initial (first) contact with each child in care by the 10th of the month, regardless of their location. The second contact requires either the COR or the COS (County of Service) to make the visit by the 20th of the month. If the COS is unable to make the second contact, the COR is required to go, regardless of the child's location. Collaboration and communication is encouraged between the COR and the COS. The COR is responsible for submitting a "Worker Contact Verification" sheet to the assigned COR ASWS by the 25th of the month. This verification sheet is reviewed by the ASWS and contacts are visually checked in the MACWIS system by the ASWS to confirm that the information on the verification sheet coincides with the information in the MACWIS system. During this review, the ASWS checks to see if the narratives are coded correctly, i.e. if participant's name is in the box. The ASWS sends a spread sheet outlining the names and dates of all face- to-face contacts made during the month. This spread sheet is forwarded to the RD for review by the 30th of the month. The RD, Regional ASWS, and/or other Regional

Staff perform random checks to see if the information submitted to the RD on the spread sheet coincides with information in the MACWIS system.

- Systemic issues with MACWIS reports are being addressed i.e. when a new worker is assigned, the report only captures the visit made by the new worker. The former worker assigned made a visit before the transfer to the new worker, but that visit is not captured on the report, thereby showing the child was visited twice in the same month, but by a different assigned caseworker.
- Systemic issues with ICPC cases are being addressed because an ICPC worker in another state, while making the required visit, cannot enter the information into MACWIS. The DFCS worker cannot enter the visit by the ICPC worker but can only list themselves as a “participant”, which is not counted.
- Runaways cannot be located to visit, but they are still counted in the caseload as requiring two visits per month, with one visit in the placement.
- Systemic issues with children who have been released from DFCS custody, but still have SSI fund, are still counted on the caseloads because the case cannot be closed as long as money is pending distribution. DFCS cannot change the recipient and forward the funds. SSI Funds must be returned to Department of Medicare for payee changes.
- DFCS is systematically cleaning up dormant cases which can affect the data negatively at first.
- Systemic issues with MACWIS were addressed in a comprehensive assessment regarding electronic case management and data system. DFCS is pursuing a system upgrade to simplify documentation for users.

The above action steps will be communicated to all Regional Directors, who will address the action steps with the ASWSs.

XI. QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Unit

As Mississippi moves to implement the provisions of the *Olivia Y.* Settlement Agreement, the Council on Accreditation (COA) standards, and practices within the Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR), the vision for CQI is one that CQI is thoroughly integrated into DFCS’ ongoing work and serves primarily as a means of reinforcing the practices which are being implemented in the state. CQI is a means of keeping the mission and vision in clear focus for staff in the field and as a primary means of sustaining the improvements achieved in practice and outcomes over time. In order for it to serve that function, CQI must actually monitor for the practices that put into place and provide sufficient feedback to staff to inform practice, decision making and resource allocation.

DFCS has developed CQI instruments and processes that are coordinated with and integrated into The Mississippi Child Welfare Practice Model. As the Practice Model is completed, DFCS will develop specific outcome measures and instruments that include the components of the Practice Model. As DFCS continues to develop CQI instruments and procedures for obtaining

information, CQI will make sure that these practices are routinely monitored as a part of the Practice Model, so there is a basis for determining conformity to practice requirements, but also to use the CQI process to reinforce these practices on an ongoing basis at the local level. Similarly, the Settlement Agreement, COA standards, and the CFSSR include requirements that are less oriented toward direct practice and more oriented toward the agency's capacity to support good practice in the field.

In developing strategies for implementing the many requirements of the *Olivia Y.* Settlement Agreement and the COA standards, DFCS understands that these requirements must be presented in ways that caseworkers and supervisors in the field can understand them in relation to their work with children and families and in relation to the mission and values. DFCS intends for these many requirements to lead to measurable improvements in the outcomes of the work with children and families, rather than simply being put into place as a compliance process. Therefore, DFCS is currently engaged in framing these requirements within a child welfare practice model that will change the way staff interacts with children and families and fulfill the compliance obligations at the same time. DFCS' CQI process is designed in accordance with the Mississippi Child Welfare Practice Model (Practice Model), and thereby supports its implementation and sustainability. To design a monitoring process that is not fully synchronized with the Practice Model would be counterproductive to the goals of the *Olivia Y.* Settlement Agreement and the COA standards, and would not provide a thoroughly integrated and consistent way of serving children and families. (See: [Appendix: E](#))

Evaluation and Monitoring Unit (EMU)

This unit is responsible for monitoring and evaluating practice to ensure compliance with DFCS standards and protocol. Also, within the EMU is the Safety Review Unit.

During the period of October 1, 2011 through September 30, 2012 the EMU made progress on the following goals:

- In addition to positions already being filled in Regions 1-North, 1-South, 2-West, 4-North, and 4-South, Family Protection Specialist, Advanced positions were filled for Regions 5-West, 5-East, 3-South, and 3-North, These individuals serve in a role of Regional Evaluation and Monitoring Liaisons.
- The EMU in collaboration with field staff conducted baseline reviews in Regions 5-East (March 2012) and 3-North (July 2012). Annual follow-up reviews were conducted in Region 5-West (December 2011), Region 4-North (January 2012), Region 1-North (May 2012), Region 1-South (June 2012), Region 2-West (June 2012), Region 4-South (August 2012), and Region 3-South (September 2012). Comprehensive CQI reports were submitted on all of these reviews. The data from these baseline and follow-up reviews, along with stakeholder survey data, and available Foster Care Review data are used to enhance the baseline data that are established from the MACWIS data indicators. The reports from these reviews will provide feedback to Directors, Supervisors, and Caseworkers to inform practice and improve the quality of service delivery. In addition to the baseline and follow-up reviews, Evaluation and Monitoring staff in collaboration with

field staff are conducting monthly case reviews from which the data (along with data dashboard and Foster Care Review data) are presented in quarterly CQI Committee meetings in each of the regions as the Practice Model is implemented.

- Validated statewide data indicators continue to be tracked during the Practice Model implementation and used to set baselines or measure progress during the October 1, 2011 through September 30, 2012 period. Some of the indicators currently being tracked are as follows:
 - Caseworker Face-to-Face Visits with Child;
 - Caseworker Face-to-Face Visits with Parents of children with a goal of reunification;
 - Investigation Timeliness for all Children
 - Investigation Timeliness for Children in Custody
 - Placement Stability (Children in care less than 12 months with 1-2 placements and all children in care by number of placements)
 - TPR Reports;
 - Rate of maltreatment in care;
 - Children who have been in custody at least 6 months and have had a timely court review;
 - Children in custody at least 12 months and have had a timely annual court review;
 - Children discharged from custody and reunified with parents/caretakers in the last year are reunified within 12 months of latest removal from home;
 - Children discharged in the last year upon the finalization of an adoption have had the adoption finalized within 24 months of the latest removal from home;
 - Number of Children in Foster Care by Placement Type;
 - Number of Children/Families in Protection/Prevention Cases;
 - Number of Licensed/Pending Foster Family Homes;
 - Foster parents, with at least 1 foster child residing in their home during the Period, have had a DFCS worker visit the home twice a month (therapeutic foster homes) or monthly (non-therapeutic foster homes), per Plan, and documented in the children's case records;
 - Children in custody, age 14-20, that are provided with Independent Living services, per their service plan;
 - No foster child remains in an emergency or temporary facility more than 45 days unless approval exception is signed by the Division Director;
 - No child is placed in more than 1 emergency/temporary facility within 1 episode of foster care, unless an immediate placement is necessary to protect safety of the child or others and is certified, in writing, by the Regional Director;
 - No child under 10 years of age is placed in any kind of congregate care setting unless child has exceptional needs that cannot be met in a relative or foster family home or child is a member of a sibling group, and the Regional Director has granted express written approval for the congregate-care placement;
 - Sibling groups, with one or more of siblings under age 10, are not placed in congregate care settings for more than 45 days;

- During the trial home visit period, child's caseworker or a Family Preservation caseworker meets with the child in the home at least twice per month; and
- All foster children remaining in placement following a maltreatment investigation are visited by their caseworker twice a month for 3 months after investigation conclusion.
- A procedures manual for the EMU has been developed and continues to be a work in progress as the unit evolves.
- The Evaluation and Monitoring Unit is using the automated review instrument in all regional on-site reviews during the October 1, 2011 through September 30, 2012 reporting period. The automated instrument will be used during the monthly reviews during the next reporting period.
- Quarterly Regional CQI Team meetings that are modeled after the Data-to-Action meeting were convened in Regions 1-North, 1-South, 2-West, 4-North, and 4-South. These meetings are co-facilitated by the Regional EMU Liaison and Foster Care Review staff. Data from the monthly EMU reviews, FCR data, and the most current data dashboard information are used in these team meetings. CQI teams will be established and will convene in the next reporting period (October 1, 2012 through September 30, 2013) in Regions 2-East, 3-South, 3-North, 5-East, 5-West, 7-East, 7-West, and Region 6.
- Data training was conducted for all Foster Care Review (FRC) and EMU staff in February 2012. This includes an overview of the data indicators, *Olivia Y.* and CFSR standards and the agency's performance in meeting those standards; user guide information on how each data report is compiled within MACWIS, and how staff can and should utilize this information for the purpose of improvement efforts.
- Monthly webinars for EMU, FCR, and MACWIS staff on how to use data in child welfare practice and reporting began in July 2012. These webinars also include a module on using Excel in analyzing data.
- Throughout the reporting period, the CQI Unit continued with the development and presentation of the Data-to-Action meetings that occur in collaboration with the implementing regions soon after they are provided with their finalized CQI report. These meetings are used to identify strengths and areas of needed improvement in order to inform practice and aide in program improvement plan efforts within the regions. Data from the on-site baseline or annual follow-up review, available FCR data, and data dashboard information drive the discussion in which ideas for improvement efforts are brought forth that are carried over into the Regional CQI Sub-Team meetings.

The goals for Evaluation and Monitoring for the coming year are:

- Continue to produce deliverables for the CFSR PIP, COA, and *Olivia Y.* requirements;
- Hire a Program Specialist for the Evaluation and Monitoring Unit to assist with management of information coming in from and going out to the regions. The Program Specialist will also assist with coordinating the annual regional on-site reviews.
- Recruitment efforts are underway for the remaining vacant positions with it being anticipated that all will be filled by July 2013.

- Update the CQI plan for SFY 2013 and beyond;
- Take part in the development of and issuance of an annual CQI report for the July 2011 through June 2012 time period and an annual CQI report for the July 2012 through June 2013 time period;
- Conduct baseline reviews in Region 7-West, Region 6, and Region 2-East;
- Conduct annual follow-up reviews in Regions 5-West, 5-East, 1-South, 2-West, 3-South, 3-North, and 4-South;
- Continue the monitoring of the state's validated data indicators to track progress and areas needing improvement to inform practice and drive improvement efforts;
- Conduct monthly case reviews on a local level in the regions consisting of regular case reviews and engaging community partners and other stakeholders in the CQI process;

Progress on Established Goals

- Filled Evaluation and Monitoring Liaison positions in Regions 2-East, 7-West, and 1-North (vacated in December 2012 due to retirement). It is anticipated the Region 7-East position will be filled by June 1, 2013. The Region 6 position has been reallocated from Family Protection Specialist Advanced to Operations Management Analyst Senior in an effort to open the potential pool of candidates to a broader one. This position has been advertised but, as of this writing, a certificate of eligibles has not yet been received from the State Personnel Board.
- The SFY 2012 CQI Plan has been submitted and has been submitted to the Court Monitor and DFCS' senior management team.
- The June 2011 through June 2012 Annual CQI Report has been completed and submitted to the Court Monitor and DFCS' senior management team.
- The CQI Annual Report and the CQI Plan have been placed on the DFCS Connection site for all staff's viewing and availability.
- Finalized work on developing a data base for aggregating the results of the CQI reviews from the automated instrument used by Evaluation and Monitoring during the on-site case reviews.

Safety Review Unit (SRU)

In order to improve practice surrounding investigations of children alleged to have experienced maltreatment in foster care, as well as to strengthen the Division of Family and Children's Services' (DFCS) staff skills and abilities to take necessary steps to help ensure the safety and well-being of children in custody and as a requirement of the *Olivia Y. Modified Settlement Agreement* (MSA), DFCS has developed a procedure and accompanying instrument for the review of all investigations of maltreatment in care. The overarching purpose of these reviews is two-fold:

- To ensure quality, comprehensive, and timely investigations into all allegations of maltreatment while a child is in out-of-home care; and

- To ensure all children in custody are maintained safely in their placements, are free from harm, and any concerns regarding child(ren)'s safety and case practice deficiencies are addressed and monitored by proper authorities.

The process includes requiring remedial actions be put into place by the field to address any safety or practice related deficiencies. These remedial actions are to be monitored by the Division of Evaluation and Monitoring within DFCS' Office of Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI).

The Modified Settlement Agreement (MSA) and the Year III Implementation Plan (IP3) of the MSA provide certain specific procedures and time frames for addressing deficiencies identified through the review of maltreatment in care investigations. As stated in MSA II.B.1, within 30 days of completion of any investigation of maltreatment while in custody, DFCS shall review the investigation, including:

- Identification of case practice deficiencies;
- Identification of remedial actions necessary to ensure the safety of the child who is the subject of the investigation as well as any other child in the home or placement as well as the timeframe in which such remedial action must take place; and
- Identification of any corrective action that is necessary to address deficiencies in case practice demonstrated by the investigation as well as the timeframe in which such remedial action must take place.

The Safety Review Unit (SRU) within the Evaluation and Monitoring Unit will conduct the reviews and monitor the quality of case practice in maltreatment in care investigations as well as the initiation and status of remedial actions to address issues identified in the MIC reviews. Specifically, the SRU will:

- Conduct reviews on maltreatment investigations of children in foster care, as identified by data from MACWIS weekly reports;
- Monitor the status of remedial actions resulting from the reviews;
- Review data reports reflecting state, regional, and county performance on various child welfare indicators associated with maltreatment in care; and
- Ultimately, provide aggregate data on safety and casework-related findings to analyze the qualitative and quantitative findings of the maltreatment in care reviews and compile results into reports that identify the strengths and areas needing improvement identified in the reviews.

The results of these reviews will be used to guide further improvements to assure the safety, permanency, and well-being of children while in DFCS custody. Trends in practice will be monitored by CQI.

The goals for the Safety Review Unit for the coming year are:

- Define the Maltreatment in Care Review process and the process for remedial/corrective actions;
- Develop a review tool and data base to collect the information gathered during these reviews;
- Develop the training for SRU staff on the review process and corrective action process;
- Request and develop a weekly run of the MACWIS report that identifies completed investigations of children reported to have been maltreated in care;
- Implement the process to review cases of maltreatment in care and report on findings for corrective actions by June 1, 2013.

Progress on Established Goals

- The maltreatment in care review process has been defined and outlined. The draft of the process has been submitted to the State Level CQI Team for review and feedback;
- The maltreatment in care review training and accompanying reference guide has been developed. The draft of the training power point and reference guide have been submitted to the State Level CQI Team for review and feedback;
- The maltreatment in care review instrument has been developed. The draft of the instrument has been submitted to the State Level CQI Team for review and feedback;
- Mock reviews have been conducted on foster home and facility reports of maltreatment in care. Included in the mock review process was the corrective action process and feedback from the field;
- Obtained two (2) Program Manager positions to conduct the maltreatment in care reviews. 1 position has been filled. The other position (as of May 2013) is in the process of being filled.

Foster Care Review Unit

The Foster Care Review Unit carries out the court mandated DFCS review of foster care cases. The Foster Care Review Program conducts administrative case reviews on all children in Mississippi DFCS custody 6 months or longer. Those case reviews are held every 5 months for all children in DFCS custody. A county conference is held on each of these cases that provides a format for parents, foster parents, Guardian *ad litem*s, grandparents, assigned caseworkers, supervisors and the children themselves to participate in and provide feedback related to case planning. Federally Mandated Determinations are documented for the Youth Court as a result of the combined administrative case review and county conference feedback by the Foster Care Review Staff and assigned county workers and supervisors.

The Foster Care Review Program has been structured under the Continuous Quality Assurance Unit and partnered with the Evaluation and Monitoring Unit in an effort to provide a more comprehensive feedback mechanism for DFCS as it relates to the quality of services provided. During federal fiscal year October 1, 2011-September 30, 2012, the following program activities occurred:

- The administrative data collection tool used by FCR staff during each case review was automated in the DFCS MACWIS system. This allowed the data collection and administrative case review feedback to be automatically linked to the child's MACWIS automated file. This has allowed the administrative review findings to be available to all administrative supervisory chains of command. Foster Care Review Staff were trained on the use of the instrument in December 2011 and revisions were made in early 2012. Training sessions occurred throughout 2012 with FCR staff.
- Questions were added to the PAD in 2012 that would be used to collect data on *Olivia Y.* deliverables and training occurred with FCR staff regarding the additional questions.
- FCR began tracking the emails sent to administrative chain of command regarding concerns noted during review that required immediate corrective action.
- Foster Care Review began tracking the overdue TPR packet referrals that were noted during each foster care review and reports were developed and submitted to administrative chains of command to oversee corrective action regarding the overdue packets.
- Review Staff continued to perform an administrative review of each child's case as well as facilitate a family team meeting for each child, their family and support systems in an effort to meet federal and state requirements for the 6 month review process and to provide full disclosure to the court so that timely permanency decisions can be made.
- Foster Care Review Staff participated in ongoing webinar training entitled *Mississippi: Building the Capacity to Implement CQI* provided by the National Resource Center for Child Welfare Data & Technology.

Goals for the upcoming year include:

- Increasing the ongoing training and professional development of Foster Care Review staff;
- Providing and utilizing updated technology (laptops, data cards and webinar/teleconference) for FCR (traveling) staff;
- Active participation by FCR in Regional CQI teams and utilizing all PAD data for CQI Regional team assessment;
- Defining stable territories (workloads) for FCR staff;
- Continue to provide feedback related to the technical needs of the unit as it relates to the functionality of MACWIS and providing information related to needed enhancements within the MACWIS system that relate to the county conference, MYCIDS interface and Periodic Administrative Review tool; and
- Enhancing the format of the qualitative and quantitative data that is collected by the unit to provide a more comprehensive picture of practice and permanency for children in foster care.

Mississippi Automated Child Welfare Information System (MACWIS) Unit

The Mississippi Automated Child Welfare Information System (MACWIS) is the statewide case management data system utilized to manage and track foster care, investigation, prevention, and protection cases as well as resource homes. MACWIS tracks an average of 3,500 children in foster care and over 5,500 children that have been in custody at some point in the current fiscal year, pursuant to Title IV-E and Title IV-B of the Social Security Act of 1935, as amended. The system supports the work of approximately 1500 users within the Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS), Division of Family and Children's Services (DFCS).

In support of the MACWIS case management data system, the MACWIS unit serves as the DFCS Help Desk team working to assist in resolving computer software and hardware issues for DFCS workers statewide. The MACWIS unit consists of 17 staff focusing on the following areas of support:

MACWIS Help Desk Support

The MACWIS help desk support staff is responsible for all calls statewide from workers with MACWIS application issues. They resolve user issues, if possible, and also serve as liaisons to the MDHS Mississippi Information System (MIS) department in tracking MACWIS incident reports that may result in call tickets to be worked by the MIS department to resolve user issues. As application enhancements are implemented, they assist in "testing" the application changes prior to implementation.

MACWIS Business Analyst Support

The MACWIS business analyst staff has been involved in many projects specific to the *Olivia Y. Settlement Agreement*. Numerous MACWIS reports were developed or modified as part of the *Olivia Y. Settlement Agreement Bridge Plan*. All of the reports were in production prior to September 2010 and are used by field staff and management to improve the quality of services provided to DFCS clients.

MACWIS Federal Reporting Support

MACWIS staff is responsible for reporting Adoption and Foster Care Analysis Reporting System (AFCARS) and National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) data to the Children's Bureau.

MACWIS Validation Support

The MACWIS Validation staff support the validation of *Olivia Y. Settlement* requirement if validation reports. The reports are on a 6 month rotation validation. Findings are reported to field staff for corrections, to the Training Unit for training of staff and to MIS for problems with the report.

MACWIS Hardware, Cell Phone, Scanning Support

The MACWIS hardware staff supports approximately 1,500 DFCS users with the maintenance, repair, replacement of all computer equipment at State Office and all DFCS county offices

statewide. Equipment maintenance and inventory tracking of desktop computers, laptop computers, printers, Wyse terminals, wireless routers, and switches is part of the hardware staff's daily operations. They also maintain all software on PC's and Laptops.

The MACWIS cell phone support staff is responsible for distribution, maintenance, repair, replacement of cell phones and PDA devices to all DFCS staff. The number of DFCS cell phones fluctuates daily, but has been as high as 1,147 issued statewide and 66 PDA devices.

MACWIS scanning support staff is responsible for scanning all MACWIS reports generated from the mainframe system and distributed by the MIS Operations department. Approximately 290 reports are scanned monthly on a shared network drive for all DFCS staff to utilize.

XII. SERVICES FOR CHILDREN UNDER AGE FIVE

Targeted Services to Find Permanent Families for Children under the Age of Five

Recruitment and Licensing of Foster and Adoptive Homes

MDHS adopted a process of licensing all foster and adoptive homes as Resource Homes in 2008. All resource homes meet all licensure standards for both adoption and foster care. The resource families are taught in pre-service training that the agency's goal is "once child, one placement." As children ages 0-5 enter foster care, the agency works to place that child into a resource home. This resource family then works with the agency staff to assist in the rehabilitation of the family toward the goal of reunification. If reunification occurs, the resource family has been set up as a permanent support connection for the family. If the child is freed for adoption, the resource family usually commits to adoption and maintains some permanent ties to the biological family.

This agency was awarded the Diligent Recruitment Grant in 2010 and this grant has funded the agency's project of targeted recruitment of appropriate resource homes. The recruitment materials have all been redesigned to reflect the philosophy of resource homes which includes shared parenting, preserving permanent connections, and commitment to permanency. Though this project is designed to target resource homes for the older, special needs population of children, the information regarding resource homes and shared parenting gives the correct messages to all populations as they first hear about an opportunity to parent children in foster care.

Beginning in 2011 the agency began assigning an adoption specialist to each case that had adoption as the child's permanent plan or concurrent plan. By adding the adoption specialist to the case to work concurrently with reunification services, it ensures that the child is either in a permanent placement at the time of TPR or a permanent placement has been identified and prepared to accept the child by the time a petition for TPR is filed.

Further, the agency conducts weekly or monthly Adoption Status Meetings on each child with a permanent plan or concurrent plan of adoption. These meetings address any barriers to

permanency, specifically barriers to adoption. Action steps are created each month with tasks assigned to specific staff to complete. By the time a child in this age group is freed for adoption, the finalization of that adoption should take place within 60 days, 90 days if there is a court issue.

Resource Development for Five and Under Population

Resource Development continues to work toward enhancing the service array for our children and families, and specifically for the five and under population through enhancing the percentages of the physical assessment within 72 hours of coming into foster care and 30 days for the comprehensive physical assessment and all follow-ups required; completion of mental health assessments within 30 days of entry to foster care for all children four or over to include any recommended follow-ups required. Dental exams for new foster children ages three and older are required within 90 days.

Zero to Three Program

The Forrest County Safe Babies Court Team in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, was created in November 2005. Before the Court Team was established, limited resources were available within the community for infants and toddlers in foster care and their families. When the Court Team was created and began holding monthly team meetings, both the Court Team and the community began to realize that many more resources were available than previously thought. The problem had been the lack of communication among the service providers, and bringing providers together for Court Team meetings and other related activities helped improve communication. Local agencies now take a “big-box store” approach to providing services. Agency representatives have come to realize that sharing resources and collaborating with one another improves service delivery. This approach has had a positive impact on the quality of care provided to infants and toddlers in foster care and their families.

For example, now all children ages zero to three entering foster care have a Part C evaluation (First Steps) through the Mississippi State Department of Health. A pediatrician rather than an emergency room doctor or family practice physician examines and treats these very young children. In fact, the pediatrician routinely reserves spaces in the schedule for these children. Often, biological parents are asked to attend these appointments with the social worker and foster parent or relative.

Since the establishment of the Court Team, visitation has increased tremendously—from once every three weeks to three to five times each week. In some cases, the parents are allowed to visit in the foster home or home of the relative in which the child is placed. Fathers are encouraged to be involved, and some children are placed with fathers and paternal family members. Before the establishment of the Court Team, children were placed as far as two to four hours away from their parents, which provided obstacles to visitation. Children are now placed in Forrest County or one of the adjoining counties to ensure that appropriate visitation occurs.

Court cases are now heard every 30 days. This systemic change has made parents and social workers more accountable and has encouraged them to have greater commitment to their service plans. In addition, the average number of placements of children being followed by the program has decreased since the Court Team was created. Children are reaching permanency much faster, and have transition plans in place and implemented prior to their return home.

The ZERO TO THREE program has brought national training to the community and has supported Court Team members and the Forrest County Youth Court judge's travel to other sites for training. Local and national training opportunities have helped community stakeholders learn new strategies and techniques for working with very young children and their families.

In the future, the Forrest County Safe Babies Court Team plans to continue to help parents and children receive the services and support needed to help restore families in Forrest County. The Court Team hopes to replicate this model of success throughout the state of Mississippi.

The Zero to Three program allows DFCS to "fast track" custody cases with children ages zero to three by implementing several procedures/services designed specifically to benefit children in that age range and their parents. These procedures/services include a developmental screening for all children age zero to three, more frequent visitation (several times per week), parent/child dyadic therapy and frequent court review. The cases are reviewed every 30 days in court. This gives all parties involved a sense of urgency. Without the sense of urgency, workers and/or parents can leave court thinking that they have 6 months before they have to come back, and they may wait 5 months before doing anything else. Know that there will be a hearing before the judge again in 30 days provides the motivation for a worker to continue pouring energy into the case. This program gives parents the opportunity to show they are serious about making changes, and it also becomes very clear when they are unable to do so and the plan needs to change from reunification to adoption or other appropriate permanent placement.

Goals:

Develop a one year pilot program establishing parent representation for the parents with children who fall into the "Zero to Three Program."

Develop a tracking method to determine if parent representation is moving children to permanency more efficiently.

Summary of Children Currently in Custody by Age, Race and Sex

DFCS tracks children in custody and their demographics through the MWZCCURS, Summary of Children Currently in Custody by Age, Race and Sex for the date range of XX/XX/XXXX – XX/XX/XXXX report. This is a standard monthly batch report. If requested, these data can be run for a specified time period. This report is designed to capture all children currently in custody from ages 0 and older. This report is also available by county with the same information.

Below is the report for October 1, 2011 through September 30, 2012, which indicates the demographics of children currently in custody under the age of five years old for that period as follows:

	White	Unknown Race	Asian	American Indian	Black	Hawaiian	Total
Male	509	18	1	2	470	0	1000
Female	491	19	1	0	443	2	956
Total	1000	37	2	2	913	2	1956

The total number of children in custody for the period October 1, 2011 – September 30, 2012 was 6274; 3037 males and 3237 females.

Based on the overall increase of children in care for FY 2012, DFCS estimates potentially a five percent increase in children under five in care by FY 2013 and another five percent increase by FY 2014, due to the high rate of unemployment, further economic decline in Mississippi and impact of potential disasters occurring in the State.

Training and Supervision of Caseworkers and Resource Parents

Training and Supervision of Caseworkers is provided through several means beginning with 270 hours of pre-service training and on-the-job training, which addresses age groups and time frames for comprehensive assessments, service delivery, reunification to occur or proceed to another permanent plan such as adoption or guardianship. Further, as each Region rolls out the Practice Model, coaches are provided to assist workers with the Comprehensive Family Assessment, Family Team Meeting and implementing services to prevent removal or to facilitate reunification.

Resource Parents also receive PATH training prior to becoming a resource parent and DFCS policy outlines the protocol for preventing disruptions and providing respite services. Additional training is provided to resource parents when a child requires special medical treatment or higher level of care and supervision.

XIII. MISSISSIPPI CHILD DEATH REVIEW PANEL

Legislation establishing a Mississippi Child Death Review Panel went into effect on July 1, 2006. The statute provided for the State Medical Examiner's Office to have administrative oversight of the CDR panel. During the 2008 regular session of the Legislature, the Child Death Review Panel was moved to the Mississippi State Department of Health. With the move to the Department of Health, staff was provided to coordinate the activities of the Panel.

The Child Death Review Panel is composed of sixteen (16) members: the State Medical Examiner or his representative, a pathologist on staff at the University of Mississippi Medical Center, an appointee of the Lieutenant Governor, an appointee of the Speaker of the House of

Representatives, and one (1) representative from each of the following: the State Coroners Association, the Mississippi Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Office of Vital Statistics in the State Department of Health, the Attorney General's Office, the State Sheriff's Association, the Mississippi Police Chiefs Association, the Department of Human Services, the Children's Advocacy Center, the State Chapter of the March of Dimes, the State SIDS Alliance, Compassionate Friends, and Child Death Review Panel Coordinator, Mississippi State Department of Health.

The Review Panel reviews data related to infant and child mortality. The primary purpose of the panel is to foster the reduction of infant and child mortality and morbidity in Mississippi, and to improve the health status of infants and children. A listing of all child deaths for that quarter in the previous year is provided to the Panel Coordinator by the Dept. of Vital Statistics and disseminated to team members who can gather information from their prospective agencies and bring to the Review. For example, the representative from the Fire Marshall's office will bring information on the fire-related deaths. The State Medical Examiner will bring vital information. Medical staff who would have had oversight over the treatment of the children bring information and are able to interpret medical language found in the reports. Coroners' reports are collected by Panel Coordinator and are utilized in the Review. Dept. of Human Services takes the list from Dept. of Vital Statistics and compares with internal reports and investigations of child deaths to bring to the Review. The Team reviews deaths that occurred approximately one year prior so that all supporting information will be available for the review.

According to statute, the Child Death Review Panel shall submit a report annually to the Chairmen of the House Public Health and Human Services Committee and the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee on or before December 1. The report shall include the numbers, causes and relevant demographic information on child and infant deaths in Mississippi, and appropriate recommendations to the Legislature on how to most effectively direct state resources to decrease infant and child deaths in Mississippi. The State Department of Health is responsible for printing and distributing the annual report(s) on child and infant deaths in Mississippi. Recommendations for preventive strategies are made in the annual report to the Chairmen of both the House and Senate Public Health and Human Services Committees of the Mississippi legislature.

In 2011, the Panel implemented a data system obtained from the National Center for Child Death Review for collection and warehousing child death information received. Much information is collected on each child's death. The Panel continues to advocate with all agencies involved to receive more information from those on the front lines of scene investigation to fully utilize the capacity of this system.

Details on preliminary findings are as follows: The Panel reported a slight decrease in child deaths in Mississippi compared to the previous year's data. There was an increase in motor vehicle accidents, increase in fire and burn-related deaths, a decrease in drowning, and decrease in Asphyxia. The strongest information revealed from the data indicated that child fatalities

from sleep-related incidents and motor vehicle incidents were the places where preventive efforts needed to be focuses. The DFCS Prevention/ Protection Unit began the planning phase during this APSR reporting period which resulted in an extensive advertisement campaign for April 2013 and following to utilize prevention resources to combat sleep-related risks to children and motor vehicle risks for children with targeted public awareness campaigns.

Child Maltreatment Deaths

The State's official validated FFY2012 NCANDS child fatality count was 7. This was down from 13 in FFY 2011 and from 17 in FFY 2010.

One use of Serious Incident Reports (SIRs) by Mississippi DFCS is to record and communicate among county, regional, and state levels regarding child deaths reported to the agency. This information may come from medical staff, from law enforcement, or from any other source and brought to the attention of the agency. The information obtained from these SIRs are then utilized in the State Level Child Death Review Team's review of the case.

The worker is responsible for indicating (via checkbox) in MACWIS whether a child died as a result of maltreatment. Validation of this data is necessary to assure accurate data. Some reasons for validation are as follows: 1) All information on the child's death may not be available to the worker at the time of data entry, 2) Worker may not fully understood the criteria used to enter this data correctly, 3) What is believed to be fact during an investigation may not be confirmed by autopsy report, 4) A child's death may not have been reported through Mississippi Centralized Intake, but came to the agency's attention through Serious Incident Reports and inter-agency or intra-agency Child Death Review Teams. For these reasons, it is necessary to review the data entered regarding all child fatalities and to assure that the worker has made corrections accordingly.

Information from Vital Statistics on all Child Deaths is given to the statewide, multi-agency Mississippi Child Death Review Panel. That Panel, which includes DFCS representation, reviews the fatalities. One way Mississippi can improve in reporting all child fatalities is to compare the data at those reviews to the deaths already known to DFCS to determine if there are any children who died as a result of maltreatment but were not brought to DFCS's attention at the time of death. That information on the deaths of those children can then be included in the final, validated NCANDS report of child deaths for that time period if the information is provided in the current fiscal year. If the information is provided for a child death in a prior fiscal year, that information will be included in the NCANDs agency file. In this way, Mississippi can make sure that information provided through NCANDS is from all sources of information. Each year, the DFCS representative on the panel works with the facilitator of the panel to strategize ways to make the information as accurate as possible and to make every attempt possible to gather the data needed.

See http://msdh.ms.gov/msdhsite/_static/41,0,170,63.html for 2011 and 2012 MS Child Death Review Team's Annual Reports.

XIV. CAPTA STATE GRANT

There were no substantive changes to State law or regulations which would affect Mississippi's eligibility for the CAPTA State grant. Further, there were no substantive changes to Mississippi's previously approved CAPTA Plan regarding how the state proposes to use the funds nor any substantive changes in how the funds were used. Mississippi continues to prioritize the implementation and improvement of the Mississippi Centralized Intake system while making strides in the other areas.

See: Appendix: F for the CAPTA Fatality and Near Fatality Public Disclosure.

A. Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment Services

Child Protective Services (CPS) is a mandated program for the protection of all children in the state alleged to be abused and/or neglected. CPS receives screens and investigates allegations of child abuse and neglect, performs assessments of child safety, assesses the imminent risk of harm to the children and evaluates conditions that support or refute the alleged abuse or neglect and need for emergency intervention. CPS also provides services designed to stabilize a family in crisis and to preserve the family by reducing safety and risk factors. This program provides an array of prevention, intervention, and treatment services including:

- Operating the Mississippi Centralized Intake Statewide Toll-Free Hotline for receiving reports of child and vulnerable adult abuse, neglect and exploitation; through personal service contract with Social Work p.r.n.
- Conducting abuse and neglect investigations;
- Providing Child and Vulnerable Adult Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation Central Registry Background checks on employees or prospective employees and volunteers for children/youth serving agencies, foster and adoptive parents, teachers, public and private child caring and child placing providers statewide throughout the united states and abroad;
- Performing criminal background checks on employees and prospective employees, volunteers, relative and foster/adoptive resource homes including all individuals in the household age fourteen (14) and older;
- Providing Case Management Services;
- Issuing Protective Service Alerts;
- Receiving out of State Protective Service Alerts
- Identifying Perpetrators via the MDHS Central Registry process;
- Adding names of Convicted Felons of Child Abuse/Neglect to the Mississippi Automatic Child Welfare System Central Registry.
- Initiating Documents for Administrative Fair Hearings; and
- Handling requests for Historical Records checks.

Mississippi Centralized Abuse and Neglect Hotline Intake Information and Referral (MCI)

The period of performance of services under this personal service contract began on September 11, 2009 and ends on September 13, 2013, with a yearly renewal option to renew and/or extend the contract at one (1) year intervals with the same terms of agreement and based upon the continued availability of federal funds at one hundred percent (100%). The performance of the contract is evaluated by the Bureau Director of Prevention/Protection Unit. Evaluations are based on the scope of services by this contractor. Mississippi Department of Human Services, Division of Family and Children's Services by way of this contract has completed the **third** program year providing Statewide (800) Centralized Intake Information and Referral and Disaster Preparedness Plan Services by partnering with Social Work p.r.n which stands for "*Pro Re Nata* or "as needed". Social Work p.r.n continues to provides an adequately staffed call center that serves as a central point of contact for reporting allegations of adult/child abuse/neglect and exploitation that is available 24 hours/day, 7 days/week including weekends and holidays, and any other official office closing, with an assurance that all calls are received and handled effectively throughout the state.

Social Work p.r.n. current contract Period of Performance is September 14, 2012 to September 13, 2013. Social Work p.r.n. has continued to maintained responsibility for the 24 Hour Hotline Intake since December 1, 2008.

Social Work p.r.n. has made provisions to record all calls both incoming and outgoing using Cybertech Recording Solutions software. All recordings are permanently stored and accessible for review by approved MDHS staff and the *Olivia Y.* Court Monitor.

To accommodate anticipated special needs of reporters who are limited/non-English speaking or hearing impaired, Social Work p.r.n. enlists the use of interpreters, the Mississippi Relay System, TDD/TYYs, Language Line, etc. In addition, MDHS, DFCS Resource Development Unit currently employs one (1) Supervisor and three (3) Interpreters to assist non-English speaking individuals to make reports of abuse and neglect to Mississippi Centralized Intake.

Social Work p.r.n. continues to maintain and to provide Information and Referral services to the general public for human services providers throughout the state.

Services provided under the Centralized Intake 24-hour Hotline Contract include but are not limited to, the following:

- Receiving and recording all allegations of child and vulnerable adult abuse/neglect reported throughout the state.
- Screening all calls according to the required MDHS/DFCS protocol upon which all MCI staff has been trained.
- A minimum of 40 hours of MDHS Centralized Intake training for all new MCI employees are accrued prior to duty, and 20 hours of on-going training for experienced employees. Supervisors accrue a minimum of 24 hours of in-service training per year.

- Based upon the screening, MCI forwards all reports not related to allegations of abuse and/or neglect to the appropriate referral source.
- MCI obtains specific information from calls concerning allegations of abuse or neglect according to the required protocol. The specific information is entered into the Mississippi Automated Child Welfare Information System (MACWIS).
- MCI staff is responsible for the confirmation and attachment of all prior history reports of persons known at intake that are located in MACWIS.
- MCI staff is responsible for referring all completed child/vulnerable adult abuse and/or neglect reports to the appropriate county of jurisdiction within ninety minutes of the reports being received.
- MCI staff adheres to the established back-up plans, when access to MACWIS is denied due to system problems. During system failures, reports and hard copies of the applied screening tools are verbally forwarded to the county of responsibility within 1 hour of being reported to MCI. Reports are entered into MACWIS as soon as accessibility to the system is restored.
- MCI staff notifies County of Responsibility (COR) on-call staff of suspected child/vulnerable adult abuse or neglect within fifteen minutes of the report being received and entered into MACWIS, with the exception of legitimate telephone difficulties.
- MCI staff persons adhere to MDHS' established policies and procedures in the handling of all reports of suspected child/vulnerable adult abuse and neglect.
- MCI staff will adhere to procedures established within the MDHS Disaster Preparedness Plan to receive calls and gather information for MDHS regarding the location and contact information for MDHS "Displaced" resource families, licensed facility staff and MDHS staff in the event of a disaster within the state. MCI staff will disseminate the gathered information periodically throughout the day of the disaster to the designated MDHS office and will continue the process three (3) to five (5) days immediately following the disaster.
- Social Work p.r.n. is responsible for the preparing and submitting of monthly programmatic and fiscal reporting for the contract. These reports also include the actual percentages of outcome measures achieved each month. An annual programmatic report is compiled and submitted to the designated MDHS office that includes information from the start to the end of each project year noting successes, failures, recommendations and other information pertinent to the project. This report is due to MDHS within forty-five days of each program year closing.
- By the 10th calendar day of each month, Social Work p.r.n. submits monthly fiscal reports to MDHS/DFCS and by the 15th calendar day of each month, programmatic reports are submitted.
- MDHS approved staff and Quality Assurance Reviewer will be allowed access to all calls and recordings as determined by the approved list of staff provided to Social Work p.r.n. by MDHS.
- The number of staff required to achieve the measurable outcomes is left to the discretion of Social Work p.r.n.

Identifying Children at Risk of Abuse or Neglect

DFCS relies upon compliance with the MS CODE 43-21-353(1) regarding mandatory reporters of abuse or neglect for notification that abuse or neglect is suspected. This statute requires attorneys, physicians, dentists, interns, residents, nurses, psychologist, social workers, family protection workers, family protection specialists, child caregivers, ministers, law enforcement officers, public or private school employee **or any other person** having reasonable cause to suspect that a child is a neglected child or an abused child to make an oral report by telephone or otherwise, and followed as soon thereafter as possible by a report in writing to the MDHS.

MDHS' Child Protective Services (CPS) is a mandated program for the protection of all children in the state alleged to be abused and/or neglected. The CPS receives screens and investigates allegations of child abuse and neglect, performs assessments of child safety, assesses the imminent risk of harm to the children and evaluates conditions that support or refute the alleged abuse or neglect and need for emergency intervention. CPS also provides services designed to stabilize a family in crisis and to preserve the family by reducing safety and risk factors. This program provides an array of prevention, intervention, and treatment services including: Operating the Mississippi Centralized Intake Statewide Toll-Free Hotline for receiving reports of child and vulnerable adult abuse, neglect and exploitation

Mississippi Centralized Abuse and Neglect Hotline Intake Information and Referral (MCI)

September 13, 2012, the State of Mississippi completed the third program year providing Statewide (800) Centralized Intake Information and Referral and Disaster Preparedness Plan Services. MCI also provides an adequately staffed call center that serves as a central point of contact for reporting allegations of adult/child abuse/neglect and exploitation that is available 24 hours/day, 7 days/week including weekends and holidays, and any other official office closing, with an assurance that all calls are received and handled effectively throughout the state.

The following are indicators that children are at risk:

- Children in homes where domestic abuse occurs;
- Whether child has previously been seen at the department;
- Open prevention cases;
- Where there is an inconsistent medical history;
- When findings on examination match the history;
- When there is a delay in bringing a child to a hospital, doctor or DFCS;
- Children two or younger who are not attending day care and are of low socio-economic status are most at risk. These are the children who are the victims of fatal abuse most often. Of all the deaths we have had in the past two years (approximately 10) all of them fell into this category. DFCS can contact the Health Department's High Risk Program and refer these children to provide extra monitoring, but DFCS must have a report to provide services. Most frequently, DFCS does not receive a report. These babies rarely leave the home, usually do not go to the doctor and are not seen by anyone other than their single mother and sometimes their father or mother's boyfriend.
- Children who have behavioral problems and parents or caretakers do not know or understand how to deal with the behaviors.

- Abuse of one child raises question of safety of children remaining in the home.
- Children are at risk in homes where parents or caretakers are chemically dependent (or fail to take necessary prescribed medication) or substance or alcohol abusers.

Goals from Child and Family Services Plan

Mississippi Centralized Intake (MCI) Measurable Outcomes:

- 94% of suspected child/vulnerable adult abuse/neglect reports will be answered, entered into MACWIS and screened to the appropriate county within 90 minutes of receiving the complete report.
- 96% of reports pulled for quality assurance will receive a score of 80 or higher; with 100 being the highest possibility.
- 98% of reports pulled for quality assurance will have confirmation of prior history attached or documentation of lack thereof being available during the diligent search.
- 98% of resource home and child placing agency reports will be entered into MACWIS in accordance to policy with abuse/neglect history confirmed and tracked.
- 100% of new employees will receive 40 hours of ongoing training and experienced employees receive 20 hours of ongoing training annually.
- 98% of daily, weekly and monthly programmatic and fiscal reporting will be submitted in accordance to established timeframes.
- 95% of all calls will be answered with a hold time of (5) minutes or less.
- 98% of calls received on the social work inquiry telephone line will be answered with a hold time of three (3) minutes or less.
- 98% of suspected child/vulnerable adult abuse/neglect after hour reports are forwarded via telephone to the County of Responsibility (COR) on-call social worker within (15) minutes of screening.

Federal Fiscal Year October 1, 2011 to September 30, 2012, the Mississippi Centralized Intake logged a total of 4,068 calls of reports involving Vulnerable Adults, 2,062 MCI Child Hotline E-Reports, plus 29,544 calls of reports involving children for a combined child total of 31,606 reports of suspected abuse and neglect of children. Hotline calls, bearing adult/child reports; information and referrals; other calls; wrong numbers, and any other time MCI answers the phone other than those indicated, for a net total of 47,399 calls.

MCI HOTLINE REPORTS AND CALLS	Federal Fiscal Year 2012 (10-1-11 – 9-30-12)	Federal Fiscal YTD 2013 (10-1-12 – 05/18/2013)	DIFFERENCE
MCI Child Hotline E- Reports Received	2,062	1,418	-644
MCI Adult Hotline Reports Received	4,068	2,560	-1,508
Child Hotline Reports Received	29,544	17,728	-11,816
MCI Hotline Calls Received	47,399	30,241	-17,158

Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry

Mississippi Department of Human Services, Division of Family and Children’s Services, Central Registry staff conduct child abuse and neglect background check requests made on behalf of MDHS/DFCS employees, prospective employees and volunteers. Child Abuse/Neglect Background check requests are also received from the following agencies and organizations: Big Brothers Big Sisters Programs; Boys and Girls Clubs; Mentoring Programs; YMCA; Child Care Facilities; Day Care Centers; Church Ministries; Mothers Day Out; Economic Assistance/TANF; Early Childhood Care & Development; Oakley Training School; Community Human Resources; Community Action Agencies; Mississippi Foster and Adoption Agencies; Out-of-State and Abroad Foster and Adoption Agencies; Head Start/Friends of Children Programs; Health Care Facilities; Nursing Homes; Hospitals; Medical Centers; Rehabilitation Centers; Mental Health and Mental Retardation Centers; Police and Sheriff’s Departments; Residential and Group Homes; Mississippi School Districts; Out of State School Districts; Youth Courts; Non-Violence Shelters; Child Abuse Prevention Centers; Assisted Family Emergency Centers; Youth Challenge; Navy Construction Battalion Centers; Adult Day Care Centers and other out-of-state agencies.

Federal Fiscal Year October 1, 2011 to September 30, 2012 totals for each provider is as follows:

Boys and Girls Clubs	573
Child care Facilities	8,047
Unlicensed Child Care/ECC&D/ EA/TANF	1,216
Community Action/Human Resource Agencies	331
Mississippi Foster/Adoption Agencies	1,877
Out-of-State Foster Adoption Agencies	508
Head Start Centers	1,719
Health Care Facilities	2,394
Rehabilitation/Mental Health Facilities	6,225
Police/Sheriff’s Departments	46
Residential/Group Home Facilities	849

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Reporting Period: October 1, 2011-September
30, 2012

Submitted: June 30, 2013

MS Annual Progress and Services Report

Mississippi School Districts	18,626
Out-of-State School Districts	29
Youth Courts	573
National Guard Youth Challenge Program	1,214
Other Agencies	85
Adult Day Care	00
Returns (problem applications)	565
Mississippi Department of Human Services	7,945
Total	<hr/> 52,792

Federal Fiscal Year October 1, 2011 to September 30, 2012 other programs areas in the Protection Unit logged the following service totals:

Historical Background Checks	419
Protective Service Alerts Sent to Mississippi	39
Protective Service Alerts Sent from Mississippi	07
Perpetrators Identified from MS Central Registry checks	93
Administrative Fair Hearings Requests Sent To AG's Office	56
Number of Names Removed From Central Registry	54

The Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006 were signed into law on July 27, 2006. In compliance with the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006, the Mississippi Central Registry program introduced the newly developed "Common Application" to request central registry background checks. The common application template includes all the necessary information and authorizations needed to process background checks through the Mississippi Automated Child Welfare System (MACWIS) Central Registry. The official notice of change giving instructions on the use of the new form is enclosed with each application request for central registry background checks as they are received from requestors.

The common application is for use by in-state and out-of-state, private and public providers of child-placing and child-caring facilities. The common application is also used for all other entities that provide child specific services. All agencies including child-caring and child-placing agencies are requested to use the common application form in its entirety by recreating the template format to their agency's official letterhead.

All foster and adoption agencies, excluding state foster and adoption agencies are required to submit a copy of their current child-placing license that documents their status as an official child-placing agency. All agencies are also responsible for providing a self-addressed, postage paid envelope bearing the same postage required to mail the central registry request(s) so that the results can be mailed back when processed.

Fingerprint Program

The Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006 (P.L. 109-248) was signed into law on July 27, 2006 and amended section 471 (a) (20) of the Act to require States to institute revised procedures for conducting criminal background check of foster and adoptive parent and new procedures for child abuse and neglect registry checks of prospective foster and adoptive parents and adult members of their household.

Beginning in FY 2008, the Process Criminal History Check through fingerprinting has been enforced as mandated by section 43-15-6 of the Mississippi code. The electronic fingerprint live scan systems are designed for ease of use and for capturing high quality fingerprint images, helping to ensure superior acceptance rates and accurate criminal history information.

DFCS was introduced to fingerprinting by the Division of Program Integrity (DPI) on July 19, 2006. DFCS' staff received fingerprinting training at the Mississippi Criminal Information Center (MSCIC) located in Rankin County. The training was conducted using the Automated Fingerprint Information System (AFIS). The first group to be fingerprinted by the DFCS was the Social Work Pro Re Nata (PRN) contract workers during the period of October – December 2006.

In 2009, DFCS increased from seven (7) to thirteen (13) Regions. Due to the increase in Regions, MDHS purchased additional equipment to accommodate the service need. DFCS has a Desktop Computer and two Notebooks set up at each of the thirteen (13) DFCS Regional offices. Two (2) Desktops and four (4) Notebooks are set up at State Office. Dave Estep, Field Service Engineer for "Identix", conducted training for MDHS DFCS Live Scan Administrators and Operators upon completion of installation. The fingerprints are checked against the following databases:

- Mississippi Department of Public Safety (MDPS)
- Mississippi Criminal Information System (MCIC)
- Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
- National Criminal Information System (NCIC)

As of February 3, 2012, MDHS live scan provider L-1 Identity Solutions reports their merger with what is now Morpho Trust USA. Morpho Trust USA is governed by a Proxy Agreement with the defense Security Service (DSS) and National Security Agreement established by the Committee of Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS). Under these agreements, Morpho Trust is eligible for top U.S. government security clearances, which focuses on the delivery of complete identity solutions within the U.S. and adhering to the highest standard for protecting all personally identifiable information.

DFCS Fingerprint Program consists of thirteen (13) regions in the state, thirteen fingerprint administrators and fifty-four plus Live Scan operators. The DFCS fingerprints all new employees, relative resource homes, resource homes, adoptive homes, ICPC placements,

volunteers and anyone residing in the respective homes who are fourteen (14) years of age and older and anyone that is entrusted with the care of the children to whom they provide services. DFCS has completed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that has been added to DFCS revised Licensure Standards and Regulations for contract providers. Once the Contracted Provider signs the MOU, DFCS offers live scan services to the Contract provider. The service was implemented January 2012.

Effective, January 2012, the Mississippi Department of Human Service, Division of Family and Children's Services started fingerprinting private providers. As of September 30, 2012, the Fingerprint Program (FPP) has received applications and signed twenty-five (25) Memoranda of Understandings. During this short period, MDHS has collected \$11,250.00 from private provider for fingerprinting their employees and private adoptive families. The Division of Family and Children's Services defray the fees, in lieu of private providers having to shoulder these fees for their respective Foster and Adoptive Resource Families.

DFCS has purchased eighteen (18) BACKUPS CS 500 500VA 120V 6 RCPTL RJ11 to be used with the Live Scan equipment to preserve data in the event of a power outages.

During SFY 2008 the fingerprinting program was granted two additional positions. Currently the fingerprint program consists of one Program Administrator and two Program Specialists which are housed at State Office.

The previous process entailed fingerprint files being returned to the respective Regional Fingerprint Administrator by Postal Service. Currently, the criminal history files are being scanned and transmitted to the respective Regional Fingerprint Administrators, electronically.

During the past six months, the Fingerprint Program has put together a draft of the Fingerprint Program Protocol, which is the process manual for State Office of the Fingerprint Program. In addition, to the increase submissions due to live Scan services being offered to Contracted Providers, the FPP can benefit for additional personnel.

From October 1, 2011 to September 30, 2012, approximately 7,743 Criminal History Background Checks have been processed. The breakdown by category is as follows:

- Resource Home: 2,724
- Relative Resource Home: 2,815
- ICPC Placement: 290
- Adoption: 206
- Youth in Care: 119
- Interns 180
- Volunteers: 145
- Employees: 432
- Potential New Hires: 570

- New Hires: 102
- ICPC Placement: 4
- Youth In Resource Home: 156

Of the number of applicants fingerprinted, approximately 1,861 applicants received Criminal History Results, which included information that was suspect to working or volunteering with DFCS. The break-down by category is as follows:

- Resource Home: 601
- Relative Resource Home: 512
- Adoption: 29
- Youth in Care: 16
- ICPC Placement: 3
- Interns: 53
- Volunteers: 2
- Employees: 60
- New Hires: 485
- Potential New Hires: 50
- Youth In Resource Home: 50

The requirement that the State of Mississippi has in place for fingerprinting everyone in resource home, ages fourteen and above, as part of the Criminal History Background Check has ensured the safety of children in the State of Mississippi.

B. State Level Citizen Review Board

During a meeting between DFCS staff and the Children's Bureau staff in April 2013, it was discussed that MS is struggling with membership and direction for the Citizen's Review Panels and Board. Although Mississippi continues to have citizen review input through the Children's Justice Act Task Force, The Children's Trust Fund, and the statewide Child Death Review Panel, it was discussed that there is a need to explore other ways to achieve the outcomes desired from having Citizen's Review Panels. It was discussed that Mississippi may want to explore ways to engage stakeholders who have already shown interest in the work of DFCS through their participation in Regional Implementation Teams throughout the state, possibly even through participation in regional Continuous Quality Improvement Reviews.

Goals:

The Prevention Unit met to strategize in June 2013. Plans were made to explore the following options to improve citizen's participation in review of DFCS:

- Form a Citizen's Review Panel consisting of former and current foster children. Mario Johnson, Division Director of the Independent Living Unit would be instrumental in this plan, and could utilize the Youth Leadership Team to help with the process.

- The Children’s Justice Act (CJA) Task Force, the Children’s Trust Fund (CTF), and the statewide Child Death Review Team are already serving in the role of citizen’s review for Mississippi. In order to maximize this effort, we will present to the CJA and CTF the process and intent for Citizen’s Review Panels. We will explain that as citizens and stakeholders with representation throughout the state, their perspectives and opinions are very valuable to the agency. We would inquire to see if any members are interested in forming sub-groups to work on a project for a specified period of time or if they would like to work as a group and provide input. These groups are already provided with updates on the agency, but more effort can be invested in achieving input on the information given.
- Continue to use the statewide Child Death Review Team annual report to inform policymakers of changes that may need to be made for safety of children based on Mississippi child death statistics.
- Invite stakeholders from Regional Implementation Teams, Children’s Justice Act Task Force, Children’s Trust Fund, and statewide Child Death Review Panel to participate in Continuous Quality Improvement Case Review process by shadowing DFCS staff reviewing cases and by participating in meetings in which strengths and areas needing improvement for that region are discussed along with strategies for improvement.
- Continue to seek technical assistance from Blake Jones, and with any others recommended by Children’s Bureau. Continue to participate in national meetings with other Citizen’s Review Panels in order to learn about successful outcomes in other states.

C. Maltreatment Case Review

A full-time DFCS attorney was hired with CAPTA funds, and he is responsible for reviewing maltreatment cases for legal sufficiency prior to presentation in court.

XV. CHAFEE FOSTER CARE INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM & EDUCATION AND TRAINING VOUCHERS

A. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP)

Independent Living Services are provided to foster adolescents, ages 14 to 21. In FFY 2012, there were approximately 1,738 teens in this age group, with 1,064 participating in the program. These services are designed to help prepare teens to live on their own as they leave the custody of the state. As teens continue to enter the program, they are given an assessment to determine the youth's strengths and needs. The Independent Living Assessment/Intake Plan consists of nine components that will be necessary for teens to achieve self-sufficiency. The components are modified as needed to meet the needs of the 14 and 15 year old youth. Services are provided statewide and cover all of Mississippi's Congressional Districts. The state was divided into thirteen regions with an Independent Living Specialist assigned in each region. Two of the specialists are Senior Specialists with the responsibility of coordinating the North and the South regions. With the Chafee Independent Living Federal grant, DFCS added an Independent Living Specialist to the contract with the agency who provides Independent Living Services. The Independent Living Specialist is responsible for completing exit interviews with youths prior to

their departure from the foster care system, sending out surveys, developing/building the After-Care Program, and tracking the data collected from returned After-Care surveys. The After-Care Specialist is located in the provider's central office in Jackson, MS.

Chafee Independent Living Services

The Independent Living Program (ILP) helps adolescents acquire basic life skills in their progress from dependency toward self-sufficiency. Youth are eligible for Independent Living Services based on the following criteria:

- Youth in care, ages 14 until their 21st birthday, are eligible for all Independent Living Services except for criteria placed on the Educational and Training Voucher program;
- Youth who leave custody, ages 18 to their 21st birthday, are eligible for after-care services until their 21st birthday; and
- Youth who enroll in post-secondary educational and vocational programs may be eligible based on the criteria detailed in the Educational and Training Voucher (ETV) Program section.

All youth must have the opportunity to participate in independent living preparations, without regard to the youth's permanent plan. Refusal by the youth to participate is not a valid reason for non-participation. All youth in care are eligible and appropriate to receive Independent Living Services, based on the child's best interest. Some services are provided through a contractual agreement to include life skills training, retreats, youth conferences and other services deemed appropriate. The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indian Tribe youth are eligible for Independent Living Services based on the same criteria for DFCS youth in care.

Mississippi contracts the Independent Living and After-Care Services to a contractor whose emphasis on self-sufficiency is top priority. The CFCIP utilizes a contracting agency, known as Southern Christian Services Inc., which uses Providing Resources, Education and Preparation to Adolescents Reaching Emancipation (PREPARE) curriculum. The contract provides statewide Independent Living and After-Care Services to youth, 14 to 21 years of age, who are in the foster care system and to those who transition out of the foster care system. The contractor provides sufficient staff to meet the needs of an anticipated 1,255 eligible youth. The program employs one Program Director, two Senior Independent Living Specialists, and seven Independent Living Specialists. The staff are strategically located throughout the State and assigned to each DFCS region.

The Independent Living Specialists employed by the contractor conduct Independent Living Skills Groups, which cover various topics for achieving self-sufficiency. These topics provide skills training, and is nationally recognized, Ansell-Casey Life Skills curriculum approved by DFCS, to participating youth based on assessments, personal contact, the Independent Living Plan Study and the Transitional Living Plan Study. The curriculum now contains eight modules. The titles of the modules are: Community Resources and Transportation, Communication Skills and Social Development, Employment, Money Management, Decision Making and Study Skills,

Housing, Daily Living Skills and Self-Care. These modules address the five (5) areas of development identified by the Youth Development and Youth Leadership in Programs Organization. The five areas identified are Working, Learning, Thriving, Connecting and Leading. An additional module titled Youth Law Issues has been added. Knowledge of the youth will be measured by the utilization of a pre-test at the beginning of each curriculum module. A component review (post-test) instrument will measure learning at the completion of each module. The results of the post-test will be compared to the pre-test given at the beginning of each curriculum component. The DFCS ILP has recognized key principles for youth to make a more positive transition to adulthood as follows: Positive Youth Development, Collaboration, Cultural Competence and Permanent Connections.

All youth, ages 14 to 21, are required to attend bi-monthly Living Skills Groups, which focus on soft and hard skills. The groups are coordinated by the Regional Independent Living Specialists and DFCS Field staff. Adolescents participating in the program under this section will also be participating directly in providing recommendations and designing their own program activities that prepare them for independent living. In addition, the adolescents are required to accept personal responsibility for living up to their part of the program. Efforts are being made to increase the number of youth participating in an active role to establish a more enhanced Teen Advisory Board (TAB). Though youth representation has been very strong in certain training events and various youth activities, there is a need to identify an increased amount of youth leaders to facilitate a Teen Advisory Board in order to provide the State with input and guidance on policy and programming. Currently there are 39 youth actively participating in TAB statewide.

TAB Mission:

Our mission is to develop youth leaders within the foster care system. Teach responsibility and accountability by offering opportunities to represent and advocate for their peers.

Mississippi has 13 regions comprised of 82 counties. Three “Youth in Care” will be selected from each region, ages 16-21 to represent their peers at the HOPE Forum by serving on either the state and/or regional Teen Advisory Board (TAB).

TAB meetings will hold discussions on issues, challenges and youth proposal presentations regarding improvements with the independent Living Program. There are two tiers in which youth may serve; the regional and state levels.

- Regional TAB: Three (3) youth (an elected State Representative, Chair, and Secretary) per region (39 youth total) will be selected by the IL Specialist and approved by the Strategies for Assessing Independent Living Services (S.A.I.L.S.) Board to represent youth in care for that region. Each region will meet quarterly to discuss any issues, questions, suggestions regarding foster care IL Services.

- State TAB: Thirteen (13) youth will be selected by the Regional TAB to represent their region at the state level. These youth must meet with the regional board in addition to the annual state meeting while maintaining the selection criteria.

CRITERIA FOR MEMBERS SELECTED AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL MUST BE:

- Participants in the IL Program
- Referred by their IL Specialist and approved by SAILS Board
- Recognized as leaders, and doing well academically or the “most improved”
- Open minded, goal oriented, have a positive attitude and good communication skills
- Attend Life Skill Groups, Retreats and the Annual Youth Conference

Progress reports of skills sessions are completed at the end of each of the eight curriculum modules by the Regional Independent Living Specialist and sent to the youth’s social worker in the County of Responsibility (COR). Upon attaining 6 skills hours, a request is sent to the youth’s social worker in the COR for entry in the State’s automated system, Mississippi Automated Child Welfare Information System (MACWIS), for the \$20.00 Skills Hours Stipend. Additional incentives are provided to increase the number of youth who participate.

The following is a list of some of activities provided during the period of June 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012:

ACTIVITY	PARTICIPANTS
Independent Living Skills Group Sessions (1,197)	1,064
Independent Living Retreats (6)	225
Computer Camp	27
Youth Conference Participants (July 11-13, 2012)	151

Stipends are provided to the eligible youth as rewards for important life accomplishments. These stipends are provided for College, Newsletter Submission, Accumulation of 6 Skills Group Hours, Start-up, Senior Year Expenses, After-Care Follow-up Survey, Graduation/GED, After-Care Room and Board and Educational and Training Vouchers (ETV).

Help youth receive the education, training and services necessary to obtain employment

In August 2005, DFCS held the first Computer Training Camp through a contract with Instructional Access, Inc. The Computer Training Camp provided training with state-of-the-art equipment to enhance the skills of those foster care youth and those who qualified for the ETV Program. An average of 35 to 40 participants attends Computer Training Camp each year. In October 2012, DFCS planned its sixth computer camp. In addition to the newly funded ETV

Program covering post-secondary educational needs and vocational programs, Mississippi provides the upgraded stipend amounts to assist youth as they transition toward self-sufficiency. The following stipends have been upgraded and/or added to assist with financial needs and encouragement to continue with their educational efforts, which will prepare them for better employment opportunities and better salaries.

College Bound Stipend: \$300

This stipend is made available to youth enrolled in college, living on or off campus. This stipend can be used to furnish the dorm room or place of residence, purchase books/resource material, computer, or other needed items not covered by other funding, excluding clothing. In the past, this stipend was limited only to those youth who stayed on the college campus in the dormitory. However, past experiences show us that by limiting this stipend only to those who stay in the college dormitory may construct a barrier for some youth who are very much involved in the ILP and are attending college or vocational programs. During FY 2012, 45 youth received a College Bound Stipend.

Community/College Graduation Stipend: \$100

This is a new stipend category which will be offered as a reward to all ILP participants for completing a two-year community college program and/or receiving a degree from a four-year college or university, or full completion of a vocational program. During FY 2011, 1 youth received this stipend.

Start-Up Stipend: \$300

This stipend is an emancipation stipend to be used for purchases associated with the establishing of a home or place of residence. This stipend cannot be used for room and board expenses, utility deposits/utilities nor the purchase or maintenance of a car. During FY 2012, 56 youth received the Independent Living Start-Up Stipend.

Pre-Assessment Stipend \$25.00

This stipend is available to all youth who complete a Life Skills Pre-Assessment form. The Independent Living Specialist will document the completion of the Pre-Assessment and will notify the COR Worker that it has been completed by the youth. During FY 2012, 236 youth received this stipend.

Post-Assessment Stipend \$25.00

This stipend is available to all youth who complete a Life Skills Post-Assessment form. The Independent Living Specialist will document the completion of the Post-Assessment and will notify the COR Worker that it has been completed by the youth. During FY 2012, 4 youth received this stipend.

Life Skills Training Group Stipend \$20.00

A \$20.00 stipend can be earned for the completion of six (6) Skills Hours. These skills groups are available through the Independent Living Specialist. The Specialist will document earned

hours and will notify the COR Worker that the youth has accumulated the required hours. During FY 2012, 518 youth received this stipend.

Youth Opportunity Training Stipend \$20.00

A \$20.00 stipend is available to youth that attend a Youth Opportunity Training. These trainings are planned through the Independent Living Specialist. The Specialist will document satisfactory participation in the training and will notify the COR Worker. No Youth Opportunity Training Stipends were received during FY 2012.

Youth Conference Stipends

This stipend is available to youth for successful completion of participation in the Annual Youth Conference. During FY 2012, 141 allowances of \$30.00 were provided.

Newsletter Stipend \$15.00

A \$15.00 stipend is available to youth who submit an article, poem or other creative writing, as well as a letter to the editor, or an editorial to the State Independent Living Coordinator for consideration for publication in any MDHS/DFCS publication. The youth may send the submission directly to the State Independent Living Coordinator, DFCS Placement Unit, and the COR worker will request the stipend. During FY 2012, no youth received this stipend.

Senior Year Stipend \$350.00

A \$350.00 stipend is available to help defray senior/final year expenses for youth receiving a diploma, GED, or a Certificate of Attendance at the close of the school/program year in which the stipend is requested. During FY 2012, 205 youth received this stipend.

High School Graduation Stipend \$100.00

A \$100.00 stipend is available to all youth in custody who receive a high school diploma. A copy of the diploma must be filed in the paper case record in the COR office. This one-time stipend is issued to the youth as a graduation gift to spend as the youth wishes. During FY 2012, 135 youth received this stipend.

GED Stipend (General Education Diploma) \$100.00

A \$100.00 stipend is available to all youth in custody who receive a Certificate of Attendance, or pass the GED (General Equivalency Diploma). A copy of the certificate or diploma must be filed in the paper records in the COR office. During FY 2012, 45 youth received this stipend.

Youth Trainer Stipend \$20.00

A \$20.00 stipend is available to youth assisting in various training activities. The State Independent Living Coordinator, based on recommendations from the Strategies for Assessing Independent Living Services (S.A.I.L.S) Advisory Board, will select youth. No youth received this stipend during FY 2012.

During October 1, 2011 through September 30, 2012, the DFCS incurred the following expenditures in the aforementioned areas:

SUPPORT SERVICES/STIPENDS	NUMBER OF RECIPIENTS/ Services	DOLLAR AMOUNT
After-Care Survey	0	00.00
After-Care Stipend (Room & Board)	2	900.00
College Bound	52	25,790.19
Senior Year	56	24,959.97
High School Graduation	61	9,860.00
GED Stipend	45	6,385.00
Start-up	56	22,332.72
Youth Conference allowance	141	7,960.00
Youth Conference Stipend (contractor)	151	4,530.00
College Graduation Stipend	4	400.00
6 Skills Hour	518	10,600.00
ETV Voucher (Federal & State)	165	535,195.43
Personal Enhancement Stipend	3	53.00
Retreat Stipend	81	3,070.00

Youth in care are provided personal and emotional support through mentors and the promotion of interactions with dedicated adults. The County of Responsibility (COR) Worker follows certain criteria before a youth is released from care including the youth has a safe place to live whether with others or alone; the youth has a means of supporting himself/herself after release; the youth has been notified in writing at least one month in advance that emancipation will be sought; and the youth has a mentor and/or resource family. The Worker identifies individual and/or family and then documents the information through the individual case plan. In addition to the mandates of the county staff, the PREPARE Program provides a pool of nine mentors for the ILP during their current contract period. In addition to these requirements, the Family Protection Worker will be mandated to give each youth released from custody the following:

- Independent Living Resource Guide
- Provide after-care services for emancipated youth until their 21st birthday (if needed)
- His/her original birth certificate
- His/her social security card
- Medicaid card
- Drivers license
- Educational Documents
- Original death certificates (if parents are deceased)
- Original documentation of citizenship or naturalization, if applicable

- Medical/immunization record
- Religious documents and information
- List of known relatives with relationship and contact information
- Previous placement information
- Passport (if applicable)
- Photographs (if applicable)

In an attempt to continue to increase the pool of mentors statewide, the current contract has been renewed with the current provider (PREPARE). One of the scopes of services with the current contractor for 2012 was to recruit and establish a minimum of eighteen mentors per contract year. The Big Brothers/Big Sisters program is another group that assists with recruitment of possible mentors and role models. The State Independent Coordinator and the current contract provider met with the agency that hosts the Big Brother/Big Sister program for the State of Mississippi, which is affiliated with the National Big Brothers/Big Sisters program. Efforts are on-going to implement assistance from the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Youth Development (NCWRCYD) to explore other mentoring programs and transitional living plans. Workers, ASWS and Independent Living Specialists will coordinate with NCWRCYD and community resource agencies to ensure all applicable services are available and obtainable to assist youth in attaining and maintaining independence after release from agency custody.

Efforts continue to provide “job shadowing” opportunities in the work force through cooperative agreements with employers. Various marketing attempts are solicited through the NCWRCYD, Strategies for Assessing Independent Living Services (S.A.I.L.S.) Advisory Board and the contract provider, to best evaluate how this can be implemented. Youth, 17 years of age and older, will be provided this opportunity. Family Protection Workers, ASWS, Independent Living Specialists and the youth will be responsible for the implementation of the service agreements.

An annual Foster Youth Conference provides personal and emotional support to youth through various interactions with dedicated adults and mentors. The adults are Advisory Committee Members of S.A.I.L.S.; DFCS Staff; PREPARE Staff; and the different program presenters, which include former foster youth who have been successful in after-care. During FY 2012, one Youth Conference was held July 11-13, 2012, at The University of Southern Mississippi (USM) in Hattiesburg Mississippi. A total of 151 youth and 49 support staff were in attendance. Youth Conference for FFY 2013 will be held on the campus of the University for Women in Columbus, Mississippi, June 12-14, 2014.

Transitional Living Plan (TLP)

The Transitional Living Plan (TLP) is a plan documenting how a youth will move from DFCS custody into other programs or to self-sufficiency. Within ninety days of the youth’s 16th birthday, or within thirty (30) days of coming into custody, the TLP shall be incorporated into the ISP. The COR Worker shall complete on the IL Plan/TL Plan screen in MACWIS the youth’s post-custody living arrangement, means of income, educational/vocational training plans, food and clothing, health care, transportation, access to a mentor/Resource Family, and

access to positive peer support. The IL Plan/TL Plan shall be developed jointly by the COR Worker and ASWS, youth, and IL Specialist. The TLP shall be updated and modified as needed each time the youth's ISP is reviewed and updated. Any tasks that need to be completed in order to accomplish the IL Plan/TL Plan shall be added to the tasks and goals under the ISP. Twelve (12) months prior to the anticipated release of custody date, the COR Worker and Independent Living Specialist (contractor), youth, and Resource Parent(s) shall meet to determine services needed to assist the youth in preparing for his/her independence. During this meeting, youth shall be notified of any health, financial or other benefits that will cease after case closing. The COR Worker should be discussing with the youth a range of living arrangements and engage him/her in an evaluation of the risks and benefits of each option. The Worker should also be discussing the availability of affordable healthcare options within the community. Child care options should be discussed with teen parents. The Worker shall inform all youth transitioning out of care that he/she is eligible for Medicaid through age twenty-one (21). It shall be the Workers responsibility to assist the youth with completing the necessary documents to continue Medicaid services and to ensure he/she has received his/her Medicaid card prior to transitioning out of care. As part of the Exit Interview form and for future reference, the COR Worker will secure from the youth information on how he/she may be contacted upon leaving custody.

There is a Transitional Independent Living Plan component in MACWIS. This component captures various areas for continued assessment of the Independent Living Plan and the Transitional Living Plan. The Independent Living coordinator continues to receive assistance by the NCWRCYD to recognize barriers of the plan. Since DFCS has provisions for after-care services, effective October 1, 2004, youth who leave the foster care system no longer have access to Independent Living Skills Groups, Stipends, Retreats, Foster Teen Conferences, or Youth Track. However, these services are being extended for up to six months after release from care in an effort to move the youth toward self-sufficiency. A contracted After-Care Independent Living Specialist is responsible for developing a functioning after-care program that provides an accurate account of the number of youth eligible for emancipation, the number of youth that have completed pre-exit interviews, exit interviews and post-exit interviews where possible, the number that have left custody, the number of surveys mailed, the number returned and documentation of where they are residing, working, in school, incarcerated, etc. At the Teen Conferences, a Career Fair was set up with educational resources, employment resources and various other services available to them.

The PREPARE Resource Library contains numerous books, curricula, periodicals and videos relevant to the needs and issues of older youths. This is available and will be utilized when contact is made by former foster youth. A toll free (1-800) number is available for youth to contact Southern Christian Services for Children and Youth (SCSCY) staff when after-care services are needed or they can go to the MDHS/DFCS Office in the county where they reside. The county worker will research the MACWIS system to verify that the youth was once in care and if they are within the eligibility period for the services requested. The After-Care Specialist and/or Independent Living Specialists will do a discharge interview with each youth when the youth is approximately 16 years of age, but prior to their 17th birthday. A follow-up discharge

interview will be done at 18 years of age and every 6 months thereafter until emancipation. The After-Care Independent Living Specialist employed by the contractor for the ILP will conduct tracking procedures of the youth leaving care.

Information gathered from the Transitional Living Plan by the COR worker will provide initial information of where the youth plans to go after custody is released. An after-care survey will be given to the youth. A \$25 stipend for returning the survey has been established to provide added incentives. In 2011, there are fifteen participants in the Independent Living Apartment program. The ETV Program will also provide additional support services to youth who are enrolled in the program prior to turning 21 to be eligible until age 23. A further description of this service program is explained in the ETV Program section.

The Independent Living Program makes efforts to coordinate the State programs receiving funds provided from an allotment made to the State under subsection (c) with other Federal and State programs for youth (especially transitional living youth projects funded under Part B of Title III of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974), abstinence education programs, local housing programs and programs for disabled youth. The Youth Conferences included programs that discussed topics such as sex education, youth and the law and various other subjects. Other areas for coordination are the Regional implementation teams and collaborating activities with the Department of Mental Health. Efforts continue to include the Independent Living Specialist at various meetings and provide opportunities to coordinate with the PREPARE Program Coordinator.

DFCS continues to coordinate Independent Living services with Federal and State programs to maximize benefits for our foster youth. Representatives from each of the organizations listed above have been invited to take part in our focus group meetings and provide input on plans being made with and for youth who are transitioning out of care. DFCS is requesting assistance of the NCWRCYD to help us in our efforts to obtain a service agreement with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to give priority housing for youth exiting the foster care system. DFCS staff, foster/adoptive parents and the foster youth continue to attend workshops, conferences, and other functions provided by the MDHS and community agencies.

Activities planned to enhance service collaboration include a number of approaches. Coordinating efforts include Southern Christian Services for Children and Youth (SCSCY) programs and various other relevant programs, such as Big Brother/Big Sister, CASA, and current youth skills groups for the youth.

As a part of the Foster Care Independence Act (FCIA) of 1999, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) is required to develop and implement a data collection system to (1) track the independent living services states provide to youth, and (2) develop outcome measures that may be used to assess state performances in operating independent living programs. The data collection system is called the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD). Activities planned to enhance buy-in from youth and staff will include various approaches. Coordinating

efforts include SCSCY programs and ongoing training for youth in care, administrative staff, and direct service staff.

National Youth in Transition Database

The National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) was developed and implemented on October 1, 2010. Data was collected and transmitted to ACF in May 2011. DFCS has not requested technical assistance from outside organizations. The Division of Independent Living, Management Information System (MIS) and Mississippi Automated Child Welfare System (MACWIS) are working together to make any changes/additions necessary to meet the Federal reporting requirements. The information required for the youth served population will be extracted from MACWIS and the survey for the baseline and follow-up populations is web-based. Mississippi Information Systems (MIS) created a web portal for the survey allowing it to be web-based with a direct link to MACWIS in order to extract the data to be reported. The survey was also available in a paper format for youth without computer access or who needed assistance.

The paper surveys were completed and sent to the Division of Independent Living for entry into the web portal for later extraction. Once the data mapping and extraction plans had been developed; a marketing strategy was created and implemented by developing a daily list of eligible youth to be contacted for their participation. This list included: youth's name, date of birth, person ID number, county of service, county of responsibility, region and social worker. The list was sent to the Division of Independent Living as well as MACWIS who scanned it to the public drive accessible to all Division of Family and Children's Services (DFCS) staff.

The Division of Independent Living conducted state-wide NYTD training for county staff and contractor staff to ensure maximum staff knowledge and participation in the data collection process. Letters were mailed to the resource parents and residential group home staff of eligible youth outlining the purpose of NYTD and the correct procedures to complete the survey. Contractor staffs were equipped with flyers and brochures to disseminate to youth during skills groups and retreats. The eligible youth were contacted by contractor staff, county staff and Division of Independent Living staff to inform them of their role in NYTD and time frame in which to complete the survey.

The first baseline survey was submitted to the ACF portal with a penalty assessed for not meeting the compliance standards for data element 35. Data element 35 refers to the 45 day time frame in which a youth must complete the survey. Penalties are assessed to data submitted on youth who did not complete the survey in the 45 day period. After a discussion with Miguel Viyera of ACF, it was determined that our system was using the date the information was entered into the web portal as the survey date as opposed to the actual date the survey was completed. Adjustments were made to the state NYTD portal to capture the actual survey date and a corrected file was submitted to ACF which met the compliance standards with no penalty assessed.

The Mississippi NYTD 2013 A Served Population and Follow- Up Population files were submitted to ACF on May 7, 2013. The files met the reporting requirements and were in compliance. We will submit the NYTD 2013 B Served Population and Follow -Up Population files by November 14, 2013.

Modifications were made to the Mississippi NYTD survey portal to capture the date the survey was administered to the youth instead of capturing the date the information was entered into the portal. This will allow us to capture and report correct data to ACF. The Follow-Up survey also had to be modified to meet ACF reporting requirements. These requirements included the addition of specific questions related to data elements 42, 43, 44, 49, 50,51, and 52. All modifications have been made and meet ACF requirements.

Mississippi sent three staff (IL Director, NYTD Coordinator, and MACWIS Business Analyst) to the NYTD Technical Assistance Conference in Washington DC the week of August 7-10, 2012. We were given the opportunity to review the data captured and submitted by all states during the first NYTD file submission reporting period. The conference also provided information about engaging youth in the upcoming Follow-Up Population survey as well as how to use the captured data to better serve our youth.

The Independent Living Unit provides continuous NYTD training and instruction to MDHS staff, contractor staff and community stakeholders through training classes and NYTD informational pamphlets and brochures. New MDHS county staff receives NYTD instruction during their intensive training. NYTD has been added to the Independent Living Training Curriculum to ensure it is fully incorporated into the Independent Living Program.

The responses captured during the Baseline and Follow-Up Population Surveys have been compiled and posted on the Mississippi NYTD portal. This data is being used to identify the needs expressed by the youth. Once the needs are identified, the Independent Living Curriculum will be modified to address the needs expressed by the youth. The data capture through the surveys allows us to provide services to youth based on their personal experiences, which better prepares them for successful transition to independence.

Outcome:

The data collected from the baseline population has been compiled to evaluate the services offered through the Independent Living Program. This compilation allows knowing first-hand what the youth are experiencing and to make modifications to ensure that the state Independent Living Program is meeting the needs of youth transitioning into independence. This information will also be shared with other DFCS state and county staff, contractor staff, youth, resource parents, residential group home staff and other state partners to promote a more collaborative effort in preparing foster youth to successfully exit custody.

The NYTD implementation was a long tedious process, but it was created, developed and executed in-house to alleviate over budget spending and full creative control to best serve staff

and youth. The tracking process continues through a database of baseline youth who participated in the initial survey. The conception of NYTD was successful and DFCS plans to continue making progress to track more youth and collect additional data in the future.

NYTD Goals:

- Maintain contact with eligible youth through Independent Living Skills Groups, email (if available), mail and telephone.
- Informational brochures and pamphlets have been created for youth, workers, group home staff, contract staff, and resource parents.
- To capture 60% out of care youth participation and 80% youth in care participation.
- We would like to structure the Independent Living Program to meet the needs of the youth we serve. The NYTD responses will allow us meet the needs directly expressed by the youth.

S.A.I.L.S. Advisory Board

In addition to the contracting agency, the CFCIP has structured the S.A.I.L.S. Advisory Board and is made up of the State Independent Living Coordinator, two DFCS Staff members from each of the thirteen regions in the State, the PREPARE Program Director, Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians representatives and youth-in-care teen leaders. Efforts continue to ensure youth are represented at the S.A.I.L.S. meetings. Youth participating in the program under this section participate directly by providing recommendations and designing their own program activities to prepare them for independent living. Further, the youth are required to accept personal responsibility for their part of the program.

Training conducted during FY 2012 and planned for FY 2013, in support of the goals and objectives of the States' CFCIP.

The Independent Living Program in conjunction with the DFCS Training Program has incorporated the Independent Living Training curriculum into the DFCS Intensive Training Curriculum offered to staff. Independent Living training has also been added to the foster and adoptive parent training held during the year and incorporates information that addresses adolescent issues. This training curriculum is provided to all foster and adoptive parent training classes conducted statewide. This training is designed to help foster parents, adoptive parents, group home staff, and case workers better understand issues confronting adolescents that are trying to achieve self-sufficiency.

The S.A.I.L.S. Advisory Board, PREPARE program, and selected foster parents and DFCS Independent Living staff attended the 2011 "*Lookin' to the Future*" Conference. The conference hosted representatives from SCSCY and presented the Independent Living and Educational Training Voucher Program to resource parents and DFCS staff. This continued the effort to educate youth on the four principles the DFCS Independent Living Program has recognized as crucial in the transition to adulthood process: Positive Youth Development, Collaboration, Cultural Competence, and Permanent Connections.

Collaboration with the NCWRCYD has been established and efforts continue to assess areas in need of further training topics. The Independent Living Training Curriculum is scheduled to be presented in conjunction with the Intensive Training Curriculum which conducts training sessions throughout the year. Plans have been discussed for the Independent Living Coordinator to be included in the DFCS regional meetings to incorporate training on the Independent Living Plan, with an emphasis on the ETV program.

Trust Fund Program

The DFCS Independent Living Program has opted not to partake in the service design and delivery of the trust fund program. To date, the DFCS Independent Living Program does not have a Trust Fund process set up for eligible youth leaving care. Youth are eligible for numerous stipends, including a \$300.00 Start-up Stipend upon being emancipated or leaving State custody.

Involving youth (up to age 21) in State agency efforts such as the CFSR/PIP process, agency improvement planning efforts, or others.

The DFCS Independent Living Program continues to make efforts to increase youth involvement with agency efforts with regard to the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) and Program Improvement Plan (PIP) process. One area is through the Youth Advisory Board named Teen Advisory Board (TAB). TAB is a youth advisory group consisting of members who are participating in the Independent Living Program. Meetings are held quarterly for the youth to discuss improvements or challenges with the Independent Living Program. Though this area has been challenging, efforts continue to determine the best way to structure this Board. Plans are in place to seek further information to improve this process, such as allowing youth to express ideas and concerns through different lines of communication, like TAB. One area utilized is the Life Skills Groups. When youth attend their skills groups, they are able to network with other youth and also the Independent Living Specialist during this time. The information obtained from the youths during the skills groups is then forwarded to the PREPARE Director to share with the State Independent Living Director to coordinate efforts to assess the overall functionality of the program. The S.A.I.L.S. Advisory Board continues to meet regularly and plans to continue holding monthly to quarterly meetings in the continuation of assessing the Independent Living Program. In the past, youth have attended some of the meetings and efforts will continue to increase the number of youth attending the S.A.I.L.S. meeting.

Other lines of communication include the monthly retreats held throughout the year and the yearly conferences held during the summer months. The retreats and conferences allow an opportunity for youth to come together and attend the scheduled sessions, but also, time is scheduled for the HOPE Forum. This allows youth to continue to express their views of the Independent Living Program which enhance the program. The plan is to encourage more youth involvement in the CFSR and PIP process.

Expansion of Medicaid to provide services to youth, ages 18 to 20 years old, which have aged out of foster care.

Foster youth who leave custody in Mississippi on or after their 18th birthday, but who have not yet reached age 21, under certain criteria, are granted Medicaid coverage through the month in which they become 21 years of age without regard to their income or resources. Foster youth may receive this coverage if they were in a licensed placement prior to leaving care. This continued coverage has been in effect since July 1, 2001. The coverage of foster youth who leave foster care continues to be implemented by the Division of Medicaid (DOM) as follows: when DFCS sends a Medicaid end date on a foster youth who is age 18 or greater, but less than age 21, the DOM bypasses the end date and locks the individual into continuous Medicaid coverage to age 21; the youth is issued a letter from DOM that specifies continuous coverage to age 21; the notice/letter is sent to the county DFCS office address and the worker ensures that the foster youth receives the notice.

Foster youth are informed of the continued coverage in order to fully benefit from this After-Care Service. The plastic Medicaid ID card issued to the youth while in care remains active for use. The county worker must make sure that the Medicaid card is given to the youth upon release from custody. Medicaid eligibility will continue for the youth until age 21 unless the DOM is notified of the need to end eligibility earlier due to a move out of State, death of the individual, or a long-term admission to a public institution. The notification of any of these terminating events is the responsibility of the county worker or other DFCS designee.

Indian Tribe consultation (Section 477(b)(3)(G) of the Act) specifically as it relates to determining eligibility for benefits and services and ensuring fair and equitable treatment for Indian youth in care:

The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians is the recognized Indian Tribe in the State of Mississippi. Choctaw youth are eligible for Independent Living Services based on the same criteria for DFCS youth in care. A representative from the Choctaw Tribe participated in the S.A.I.L.S. Advisory Board during FFY 2012. The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians was invited to attend the annual teen conferences, teen retreats and SCSCY's 2012 "*Lookin' to the Future*" Conference, held in Natchez, Mississippi. Choctaw representatives participated in the Five-Year Strategic Planning Conference in February 2012.

The NCWRCYD provided technical assistance for the Independent Living Program and many areas were identified for growth of the program. The consultation was documented and implemented toward the development of the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP). The Independent Living Program incorporates areas that ensure eligibility determination for benefits and services, which includes fair and equitable treatment for Indian youth that are identified in the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians.

Under the Chafee Foster Care Independence Act of 1999, P.L. No. 106-169, signed by the President on December 14, 1999, States were given the option to extend Medicaid coverage to youth ages 18 to 21, who were in foster care on their 18th birthday. The criteria and procedures

apply only to youth who are receiving foster care IV-E or Child Welfare Services (CWS) Medicaid at the time they leave MDHS/DFCS custody on or after their 18th birthday. Foster youth who receive Medicaid or health benefits under other categories such as SSI, TANF, Economic Assistance, CHIPS, and Regional Medicaid will not be in the category for the automatic continuous Medicaid coverage up to age 21. Those individual programs will determine eligibility for continued coverage. The main criterion for determining eligibility is to make certain the youth identified meet the requirements described by the CFCIP.

MDHS/DFCS does not discriminate on the basis of race, age, sex, religion or national origin. All benefits will be equally distributed across the board solely based upon the age of the youth and by custody of MDHS/DFCS or the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. Eligible recipients must be participating in the Independent Living Program activities and have an Independent Living and /or Transitional Living Plan that has been developed based upon input by the youth. Monthly reports are generated through MACWIS and are provided to the Independent Living Specialists as their case loads. The Foster Care Review Unit reviews all Individual Service Plans (ISP) every six months and alerts the Placement Unit if no documentation of Independent Living services is being provided. The names of those youth identified are referred to the Independent Living Specialists for Independent Living services.

MDHS has established the Program Integrity Unit, which conducts periodic evaluations of programs. The Independent Living Program along with the Program Integrity Unit will enforce standards and procedures to prevent fraud and abuse in the programs carried out under the plan.

B. Education and Training Vouchers (ETV)

The ETV Program enacted in 2001, and administered through the State child welfare agency provides Mississippi with supplemental resources to meet the educational and training needs of youth aging out of foster care including post-secondary educational and vocational programs. This program makes vouchers of up to \$5,000 per year available to eligible youth attending institutions of higher education. This includes youth who have left foster care because they attained 18 years of age but have not yet attained 21 years of age; youth likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age, commensurate with the State criteria used to determine eligibility for the program; and former foster care recipients, age 21 and younger. Students participating in the voucher program at age 21 and making satisfactory progress toward completing their course of study or training may continue up to age 23. Mississippi will provide vouchers to youth who are adopted from foster care after age 16 but have not yet reached 21 years of age. The State will comply with the Program Instructions that explain the CFCIP and ETV Programs by the implementation of the plan. Various description of methods have been described to ensure that the total amount of educational assistance to a youth under this program and any other Federal assistance program does not exceed the total cost of attendance. DFCS will strive to ensure and avoid any duplication of benefits under this and any other Federal assistance program.

During our first year of implementation of the Chafee Educational and ETV Program, there were several barriers that resulted in Mississippi not utilizing the federally allocated funds. The following barriers were identified:

- Time required of Workers in completing the process and not enough workers;
- Application and approval process is cumbersome; and
- Ineffective marketing of the ETV program.

To maximize these funds for our youth, DFCS enlisted technical assistance from the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Youth and Development (NCWRCYD). To improve the use of ETV funds, the technical assistance will target the following areas:

- Strategies to more effectively administer the State's ETV funds;
- Clarification of "allowable expenses" as defined by the Higher Education Act of 1965; and
- Mississippi ETV application, approval and award process.

The following strategies were implemented:

- Enlisted SCSCY services to assist youth with the application process to decrease the time required of DFCS social workers;
- Eliminated unnecessary steps in the ETV application approval and award allocation process; and
- Provided information on the ETV program to all interested parties including, youth in care, resource and adoptive parents, group homes, residential facilities, mentors, stakeholders and secondary and post-secondary educational institutions.

The State Independent Living Coordinator attended various meetings to market the ETV Program in which youth were present and had the opportunity to discuss the ETV procedures and application process. The board meeting with the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) included representatives from the courts, Attorney General's Office and other helping professions. Various questions were asked and responded to of the possibilities of using ETV funds.

Mississippi's plan is to continue to use the assistance of SCSCY, along with DFCS staff to assist in identifying youth who are eligible for the ETV funds. The services of the PREPARE Independent Living Specialists to assist eligible youth with the ETV application process have been included in the Scope of Services. The plan for the new ETV approval process was shared with the DFCS Director, the Regional Directors, and all State Office Unit Directors. The State Independent Living Coordinator provided an in-service training, question and answer session on the revised ETV process with the PREPARE Program Director, the two Senior Independent Living Specialists, and the Independent Living Specialists. The revised ETV Process has been well received by all.

The revised ETV approval process is as follows:

- Independent Living Specialists will assist in identifying eligible youth;
- Independent Living Specialists will coordinate financial aid application/packet with youth and the institution. (Free Application for Federal Student Aid-FAFSA and Mississippi Tuition Assistance Grant-MTAG);
- The youth must first apply for and have received confirmation and/or disapproval notices from applications made for the Pell Grant, MTAG, scholarships or other grants for which the youth may have applied. The Independent Living Specialist must also factor in the sources and amounts of any other funds that may be available to the youth;
- The Independent Living Specialists will coordinate the ETV application with youth and send application to the COR Worker and ASWS for signature;
- Upon obtaining signatures the Independent Living Specialists will send the ETV application to the State Independent Living Coordinator for review;
- The State Independent Living Coordinator sends the ETV notification to DFCS Administration Unit Director to ensure the COR has ample state funds in the MACWIS report for the county to select an Education and Training Voucher Support Service;
- The State Independent Living Coordinator notifies (by phone or e-mail) the COR Worker to expedite notice to enter the ETV support service request in MACWIS by selecting the Education and Training Voucher Support Service;
- COR Worker enters the ETV request in MACWIS, and a tickler (electronic notification) is received by the Area Social Work Supervisor (ASWS) to review/approve the ETV request in MACWIS;
- A tickler (electronic notification) is sent to the State Independent Living Coordinator;
- The State Independent Living Coordinator reviews/approves the ETV request in MACWIS;
- The ETV tickler (electronic notification) goes to the COR Bookkeeper to be expedited; and
- The COR Bookkeeper prepares payment for the approved ETV Support Service Provider (vendor or youth).

While the ETV application approval process has been revised, additional assessments of the process are still needed to improve timely approval. The National Resource Center for Youth Development (NRCYD), the S.A.I.L.S. Committee and the State Independent Living Coordinator are collaborating to identify steps that can be taken to further reduce barriers for timely application approval. Strategies already in place to accomplish this task include the following:

- The SCSCY contract renewal was modified to include a revised scope of services based on the assistance with the application process.

ETV funds are used to assist foster youth and former foster youth with funds to successfully transition toward self-sufficiency. The availability of the funds will empower DFCS staff with the bargaining tools to encourage youth to attend college or vocational training schools. Ninety-three youth received ETV funds in 2012. The expected outcomes of maximizing the ETV funds are the:

- Youth will be able to enroll and complete post-secondary and vocational programs;
- Youth will be more marketable and able to broaden the spectrum of job opportunities;
- Youth will be able to afford better housing and transportation;
- Youth will be able to be more self-sufficient; and
- Youth will have an opportunity to break the cycle of dependency on the State.

Mississippi's plan is to expand the ETV funds by:

- Assisting with room and board for youth attending college;
- Assisting with enrolling eligible youth into a computer camp for training on computer skills;
- Purchasing computers for youth participating in the ETV Program;
- Assisting with child care vouchers;
- Assisting with travel expenses to include insurance payments;
- Continuing to explore assisting with car insurance (liability);
- Assisting with membership to school related organizations;
- Assisting with preparatory test and study materials; and
- Providing payments for travel expenses incurred when going home for the holidays or vacations, or payments for other housing when the college dormitories are closed.

SCSCY's July 2012 "*Lookin' to the Future*" Conference served as a forum to orient Independent Living Specialists, and foster/adoptive parents attending the Independent Living technical assistance sessions. Those attending the conference included the DFCS State Independent Living Coordinator, selected S.A.I.L.S. Advisory Board members, the PREPARE Independent Living Specialists, the PREPARE Program Director, foster and adoptive parents from the thirteen regions. Representatives from the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians were invited to attend. DFCS Independent Living Coordinator provided Independent Living and ETV sessions to increase growth in the areas of positive youth development, creative life skills training, transitional outreach programs, becoming a responsible teen, working together for successful youth transition, and the law.

The State Independent Living Director attended the regional staff meetings to provide ETV training to ASWS about the revised application and approval process. The Independent Living Specialists were invited and attended scheduled foster/adoptive parent training. This enabled the Independent Living Specialists to discuss with the foster/adoptive parents the ETV application

and approval process for youth in their care. A reassessment of the contractual scope of services was completed by July 2012 and will continue annually.

The following eligible individuals will be considered for ETV:

- Youth currently in the foster care system;
- Youth who have left foster care because they attained 18 years of age, and have not yet attained 21 years of age;
- Youth who were adopted at age 16 and have not yet attained 21 years of age;
- Youth who graduate from high school, receive a GED, or certificate of attendance; and
- Students must have participated in the ETV Program prior to their 21st birthday in order to continue receiving ETV funds until age 23.

Before the ETV funds can be considered, the County of Responsibility Worker (COR), PREPARE, Independent Living Specialists and/or the youth must first apply for and have received confirmation and/or disapproval notices from applications made for the Pell Grant, MTAG, scholarships, or other grants for which the youth may have applied. The Independent Living Specialist must also factor in the sources and amounts of any other funds that may be available to the youth. Mississippi will use ETV funds to supplement funds needed to cover expenses not covered in the youth's financial award package up to \$5,000 per year. The funds may be applied for annually or by the time frame of the institution of higher learning or vocational program the youth is enrolled in that shows completion of a semester or term. Funds will be applied for on the following criteria:

- Enrolled in an institution of higher education, as defined by the Higher Education Act of 1965:
 - Awards a Bachelor's Degree or is not less than a two-year program (Associate's Degree) that provides credit toward a degree, or
 - Provides not less than one year of training toward gainful employment; or
 - Is a vocational program that has been in existence for at least two years and provides training for gainful employment.
- In good standing with the college, university or vocational training school;
- Maintaining a grade point average of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale;
- If grade point average is below a 2.0, the youth has one semester to reestablish a 2.0 grade point average;
- Making progress toward completing the programs in which they are enrolled; and
- Priority will be given to full time students in the event of ETV funding depletion in and federal fiscal year.

A worker who receives an ETV request from a youth out-of-care and eligible for the ETV program shall complete a Case Management service in MACWIS requesting the appropriate support service for the ETV voucher. The request can be entered from any county location,

regardless of the originating county of responsibility. Youth enrolled in the ETV program on their 21st birthday may continue in the ETV program until their 23rd birthday upon meeting the above criteria.

C. Chafee Foster Care Independent Program – Independent Living Services

MDHS/DFCS is the agency responsible for administering the Chafee Foster Care Independent Program (CFCIP) and the Educational Training Vouchers (ETV) Programs. The Independent Living Program utilizes a contracting agency, Southern Christian Services for Children and Youth (SCSCY). The contractor provides a wide array of independent living services in the Providing Resources, Education and Preparation to Adolescents Reaching Emancipation Program (PREPARE).

The mission of the Independent Living Program (ILP) is to provide youth and young adults in care with an array of services and resources to assist and guide them in making a successful transition to become independent adults.

The ILP helps adolescents acquire basic life skills in their progress toward self-sufficiency. The following list is a list of the goals in the CFSP and a brief description of progress:

- Maximize the Use of the ETV funds o ensure youth obtain post-secondary education and vocational training.
- Efforts have been successful to maximize the use of ETV funds to ensure all identified youth participate and obtain post-secondary education and vocational training. DFCS estimates that all funds will be maximized.
- Increase awareness on the ETV process for eligible youth;
- Through joint efforts of MDHS/DFCS staff and contractor staff for Independent Living Services, ETV awareness has increased. This is an on-going effort to ensure all youth are made aware of the process. To date, all eligible youth are participating in the ETV program.
- Enable youth to become fully functional citizens upon their departure from foster care custody. Major efforts have been conducted and are ongoing to collaborate with various resources and additional service providers to achieve this goal.
- Maximize existing mentor programs established by the State; and
- The DFCS Independent Living Program has identified various possible mentor programs for youth in care. Efforts have been made, and continue to be made, to recruit potential mentors in the communities across the State.

For a detailed discussion of each of the above listed goals, please refer to Chafee Foster Care Independent Living Services write up description.

Steps the State agency will take to expand and strengthen the range of existing services and develop and implement services to improve child outcomes.

There are steps DFCS, in reference to the DFCS Independent Living Program, has identified to expand and strengthen the range of existing services to youth, which have been developed and implemented to improve outcomes. One of those steps identified is increased involvement of the direct care taker in assessing the life skills level of the youth and involvement in the preparation of the youth towards self-sufficiency.

All youth must have the opportunity to participate in independent living preparations, without regard to the youth's permanent plan. Refusal by the youth to participate is not a valid reason for non-participation. Independent Living Services are mandatory and not optional for all youth in care who are at least 14 years old but less than 21 years old. All youth in care are eligible and appropriate to receive Independent Living Services, based on the child's best interest. Some services are provided through a contractual agreement to include life skills training, retreats, youth conferences, and other services deemed appropriate. The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indian Tribe youth are eligible for Independent Living Services based on the same criteria for DFCS youth in care.

Youth are eligible for Independent Services based on the following criteria:

- Youth in care, ages 14 to their 21st birthday, are eligible for all ILS except for criteria placed on the ETV Program;
- Youth who leave custody, ages 18 until their 21st birthday, are eligible for After-Care Services until their 21st birthday; and
- Youth who enroll in post-secondary educational and vocational programs may be eligible based on the criteria from the ETV Program.

There are no revisions to the existing goals and objectives for the Independent Living Program.

The goals and objectives of Independent Living services are consistent with the Child and Family Services Plan. During an intense evaluation by the Director of Independent Living services, Strategies for Accessing Independent Living Skills committee (S.A.I.L.S.), and the Program Director, it was determined the current goals and objectives would not change. DFCS is continuing to work in conjunction with Southern Christian Services (contractor) to achieve our goals and implement the objectives outline by the Independent Living program curriculum.

Services to be provided in FY 2012, highlighting any changes or additions in services or program design and how the services will achieve program purposes:

For a detailed discussion of the above please refer to Chafee Foster Care Independent Living Services.

Population(s) to be served, the geographic areas where the services will be available, and the estimated number of individuals and/or families (or to be) served:

- Youth are eligible for Independent Services based on the following criteria;
- Youth in care, ages 14 to their 21st birthday, are eligible for all ILS except for criteria placed on the ETV Program;
- Youth who leave custody, ages 18 until their 21st birthday, are eligible for After-Care Services until their 21st birthday; and
- Youth who enroll in post-secondary educational and vocational programs may be eligible based on the criteria from the ETV Program.

For a detailed discussion of the above please refer to Chafee Foster Care Independent Living Services.

Room and Board

Room and board payments are not offered to youth ages 18 to 21 that have left foster care. Room and board is defined as payment for general oversight for youth in foster care. Room and Board payments can be used toward rent for an apartment for youth in foster care who have attained age 18 and meets the requirements through the Independent Living Placement program (I.L.P.). The Independent Living Placement program is defined as placement in an apartment, house, or rooming house with supervision from a licensed placement agency. This program pays standard board payments to the leasing agency. The youth pays the remaining balance after the board payment has been applied (if there is any) and all utilities while participating in the program. For the next grant year, DFCS would like to reserve 15% of Chafee Independent Living funds to be used for room and board (rental assistance/aftercare services) for youth who have transitioned out of care.

Annual Credit Reports for in care age sixteen (16) and up:

- The Mississippi Automated Child Welfare System (MACWIS) will be used to acquire a report that identifies all youth in care age 16 and up. The report will include a youth's name, age, date of birth and social security number.
- A consent form giving MDHS/DFCS permission to obtain a youth's credit report will be distributed to the County of Responsibility (COR) Worker to explain and attain the youth's consent/signature.
- After the Division of Independent Living (IL) receives the consent form from the COR Worker, an IL staff person will proceed with submitting a request to the three major credit reporting bureaus.
- The COR worker will have the ability to print the credit report to give to the youth.
- Each youth will sign an acknowledgment form stating they received and reviewed a copy of their credit report.

- The acknowledgement form will be maintained in the COR file and State Office Independent Living file.
- This process will be completed annually with all eligible youth to satisfy the federal mandate.

Resolving Inaccuracies in a Youth's Credit Report:

- If inaccuracies are identified on a youth's credit report, the COR worker will be responsible for doing the following:
 - Assisting the youth with filing a police report with the local law enforcement agency,
 - Assisting the youth with contacting the three major credit bureaus,
 - Assisting the youth in contacting creditors and financial institutions,
 - Assisting the youth in obtaining legal counsel, if needed,
 - Assisting with contacting the Social Security Administration, and
 - Assisting with filing a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission,

MDHS/DFCS will exhaust all efforts to ensure youth leaving care have correct and accurate credit reports.

Credit Check/Identity theft Policy and Training:

- The Division of Independent Living will develop policy for the credit check process.
- The Division of Independent Living will develop training and train the appropriate MDHS/DFCS staff before beginning the credit check process.
- The credit check/identity theft training will be added to the Independent Living refresher training for DFCS field staff.
- The Division of Independent Living will be available for technical assistance to MDHS/DFCS workers when needed.
- Credit Check/Identity Theft training will be make available on the DFCS connection website.

CFCIP accomplishments achieved in FY 2012 and planned activities and budgetary levels for FY 2012 for each of the five purpose areas:

- Youth participation in S.A.I.L.S. monthly meeting;
- Independent Living Program adopted two slogans, "Now is the Time...Today is the Day!" and "Freedom Brings Responsibility" focuses on encouraging all participants, from staff to youth, to get involved as much as possible;
- Continue the Teen Advisory Board (TAB);
- Printing and distribution of the ETV brochure;

- Distribution of the new Independent Living Policy;
- Printing and distribution of the credit check brochure;
- Continue contact with a mentor program-Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Mississippi;
- Six Youth retreats held throughout the contract year;
- One Youth Conference held in June;
- Mississippi selected to participate in the National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning;
- Training of Child Welfare Agency Supervisors in the Effective Delivery and Management of Federal Independent Living Service for Youth in Foster Care;
- Independent Living Program and ETV Program Power-Point presentation completed for presenting state-wide;
- Regional meetings attended to present information;
- The Third Annual Computer Camp for youth in care held;
- Transitional Living Plan updated and released for usage in MACWIS. New commands placed on the Individual Service Plan to make it mandatory to complete a Transitional Living Plan for all youth who turn 16;
- Implementation of the FYI-3 handbook for foster youth;
- Training and technical assistance received from the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Youth Development;
- Increase in the stakeholder relationship with the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indian Tribe;
- Mississippi Band of Choctaw youth attended Skills Group, and the Youth Conference;
- Youth information was presented by the NRCFCPPP at three major conference venues in Mississippi;
- Print and issue Independent Living Resource Guides; and
- Continue Independent Living Town Hall Meetings (IL Training) in all thirteen (13) Regions.

Independent Living Goals for FFY 2011 through 2014 Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP):

- Provide community awareness of the needs of stakeholders in and out of care;
- Develop a functioning After-Care Program in conjunction with the National Youth in Transition Database survey (NYTD) that provides an accurate number of stakeholders age 17, 19, 21, and stakeholders eligible for emancipation. After-Care Programs shall also include: the number of youth that have completed pre-exit interviews, exit interviews, post exit interviews, and NYTD survey. The After-Care program will track the number of stakeholders that have left custody, the number of surveys mailed, the number returned, and the logistical information for each youth (current residence, employment, name and location of school, if applicable, incarcerated, etc.);
- Provide Independent Living Training in conjunction with Foster Parent Training through conferences, foster/resource parent trainings and/or other venues;

- Recruit a minimum of ten youth per sub-grantee period to be presented to the Strategies for Achieving Independent Living Services (SAILS) Advisory Committee for approval for the Independent Living Apartment Placement Program; and
- Implement annual credit check process.

Progress on Established Goals and Planned Activities:

The DFCS Independent Living Program is contracting with SCSCY-PREPARE Program to provide the following services for the upcoming year:

- The employment of a Program Director who will coordinate all facets of the Independent Living Program from a central office, preferably in the Jackson area, where coordination with the State Office can be maintained, two Senior Independent Living Specialists, Independent Living Specialists for the geographically outlined DFCS regions designated by DFCS.
- Shall provide services to youth living in foster homes, emergency shelters, group homes, relative placements, residential treatment centers, therapeutic group homes, training schools located in Mississippi and the Mobile, Alabama area. Distribute and announce any and all activities for the Independent Living Program to youth placed in the areas above including the State Independent Living Coordinator.
- The utilization of data collected and furnished by DFCS to locate and administer an independent living skills assessment and program to each appropriate youth who is eligible for the Independent Living Program.
- Provide monthly statistical reports by region and by counties to include the number of eligible youth for Independent Living services, the number of skills groups offered, the number of youth actually participating and the percentages of participation.
- Provide monthly activity reports that reflect unduplicated numbers of youth to whom services were given and the nature of the services. Reports are due by the tenth day of each month.
- Provide a quarterly report to include the following information: Job Status, Type of employment, Level of pay, Type of benefits and a target of 60% achievement of a high school diploma. Of the remaining 40% that did not receive a high school diploma, one-half should achieve a GED.
- Provide an Independent Living Plan and a Transitional Living Plan for each participating youth based on Independent Living assessment results and personal contact. The Transitional Living Plan shall be updated every six months, and distributed to the County of Responsibility worker of that particular youth. The Independent Living Plan will be updated after the completion of each component.
- Provide skills training, using nationally recognized Ansell-Casey Life Skills curriculum, approved by DFCS, to participating youth based on assessments, personal contact, the Independent Living Plan Study and the Transitional Living Plan Study. The curriculum now contains eight modules. The titles of the modules are: Community Resources and Transportation, Communication Skills and Social Development, Employment, Money

Management, Decision Making and Study Skills, Housing, Daily Living Skills, and Self-Care. These modules address the five areas of development identified by the Youth Development and Youth Leadership in Programs Organization. The five areas identified are Working, Learning, Thriving, Connecting and Leading. An additional module titled Youth Law Issues will be added during the contract period. Knowledge of the youth will be measured by the utilization of a pre-test at the beginning of each curriculum module. A component review (post-test) instrument will measure learning at the completion of each module. The results of the post-test will be compared to the pre-test given at the beginning of each curriculum component. A statewide average score of 70% achievement for each module will be the target. A compilation of the data will be provided to the State Independent Living Coordinator. Skills Group activities, when appropriate, shall be conducted at key physical locations of the Component presented, at the discretion of the IL Specialist. Key physical locations may include, but not limited to, grocery store, bank, post office, social security office, etc.

- Transportation to skills groups, retreats, teen conferences shall be provided and/or otherwise arranged by the Independent Living Specialists.
- Continuing to encourage DFCS youth to learn and maintain self-sufficiency through working and social involvement is significant when teaching independent living skills. In an attempt to continuously encourage youth and refrain from discouraging them, DFCS has developed several approaches that can be utilized to justify giving youth credit for skills group hours when working or participating in after school activities:
 - Obtain a copy of participant's work schedule and if work times correlate with skills group time, give youth 1.5 credit hours for skills activities.
 - Visit participant's place of employment to verify he/she is learning and adapting to his/her work environment.
 - Obtain a copy of participant's practice/rehearsal schedules to insure practice/rehearsal times correlate with scheduled skills group activity times. If times correlate, give youth 1.5 credit hours for skills group activities.
 - Visit the participant's practice/rehearsal and talk with a coach or activity sponsor to discuss behavior changes he/she may display.
 - When documenting skills group hours for youth who are not actively participating in skills group activities but earning credit for working or involvement in school activities, give a brief description of how the youth is using, acquiring or perfecting a skill being taught in skills group session.
- Provide community awareness of the needs of the youth in foster care by participating in available forums. Reports of meetings attended will be completed monthly and a copy provided to the State Independent Living Coordinator.
- The planning and coordination of one youth conference for 65 youth, ages 15-18, and 30 DFCS Staff who are appropriate for participation in the Independent Living Program. The planning and coordination will include, but not be limited to: living accommodations, meals, transportation, agendas, itineraries, presenters, activities, schedules and two Registered Nurses. Youth Conferences are sponsored events of DFCS and shall be publicized as such.

- The planning coordination of at least three (6) retreats to be located in different geographical areas of the State so as to furnish an opportunity for participation by appropriate youth in at least one retreat during the contract period. One of those retreats will be designated fishing/wildlife events for youth age 14-15 and youth age 16-18. The event shall be presented to apply fishing to life skills and principles. This is to uphold the principle of “Give a man a fish, feed him for a day; teach a man to fish, feed him for a lifetime.”
- Each retreat shall be open to approximately forty youth, with a minimum of twenty participants. The planning and coordination shall include, but not be limited to: living accommodations, meals, transportation, agendas, itineraries, presenters, activities, and schedules. Retreats will be based on themes to include, but not limited to, leadership, healthy choices and abstinence.
- Develop a functioning After-Care Program that provides an accurate account of the number of youth eligible for emancipation, the number of youth that have completed pre-exit interviews, exit interviews and post exit interviews, the number that have left custody, the number of surveys mailed and the number returned. A breakdown of where they are residing, working, school, or current location will be provided. Follow up efforts shall include Educational and Training Voucher (ETV) application process to serve as a liaison between MDHS and the former foster youth ages 18-22.
- Develop and disseminate After-Care brochures, flyers, resource materials and other documents. Stipend payments will be made by Southern Christian Services for Children and Youth (SCSCY) upon receipt of the completed survey forms to encourage increased participation. The use of surveys will be discussed at retreats and skills groups to make youth aware of the use of the information and the available stipend. Information shall be distributed to locations named in Scope of Services #2, and all DFCS county offices.
- Recruit a minimum of 20 youth per contract period to be presented to the S.A.I.L.S. Advisory Board for approval of the Independent Living Apartment Placement Program.
- Recruit Resource Family training in conjunction with DFCS foster/adopt staff and Training Unit. Independent Living staff will attend a minimum of two scheduled foster/adoptive parent training sessions per Adoption District to increase awareness of the needs of older youth. Independent Living Specialists will contact DFCS Adoption Administrators to obtain Resource Family training calendars.
- Achieve a target goal to make contact with all eligible participants, between the ages of 14 to 21. A 15% increase in the number of youth who participate on a regular basis is the target for the contract period.
- Recruit and refer a minimum of fourteen mentors for youth in the Independent Living Program per year. Explore current resources of any existing mentor programs such as Big Brother/Big Sister for the state of Mississippi to possibly implement and assist with mentor recruitment.
- SCSCY staff, in conjunction with the S.A.I.L.S. Regional Representative, will facilitate a youth led Hope Forum (Support Group) for each of the seven Regions. The SCSCY staff will work with the State Independent Living Coordinator and MDHS staff to implement youth led support groups. HOPE Forums will be held quarterly. Two representatives

from each region will be nominated at the regional level to attend on an S.A.I.L.S. Advisory Board meeting.

- Increase by 10% the number of youth who are entering postsecondary education. Awareness tactics will be developed and implemented to increase Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) requests by 10%.
- SCSCY staff in conjunction with the S.A.I.L.S. Advisory Board members will provide nominations for the Independent Living All-Star Youth display for the contract period.
- Create and distribute a newsletter highlighting Independent Living Services and activities. The newsletter is to be distributed quarterly to all individuals listed in Scope of Services #2. A copy of the newsletter is to be submitted to the State Independent Living Coordinator two days prior to circulation.
- Distribute and keep a log of the FYI-3 Handbook provided by MDHS-DFCS. The FYI-3 Handbook is to be distributed to youth in care listed in the County of Services Independent Living report provided by MDHS to all youth, ages 14-20, who enter care. SCSCY staff will deliver a handbook and document the delivery to each youth who turns 14 during the contract period.
- All services provided are to reflect and incorporate the four Core Principles for youth transitioning. They include: Youth Development, Collaboration, Cultural Competence and Permanent Connections.
- Develop a survey to capture information needed for the National Youth Transitional Database.
- The Refugee youth will continue to attend independent living sessions and will receive all the benefits the Independent Living Program has to offer.

Planned Activities for 2014:

- Four (4) Independent Living Retreats per region
- One (1) Youth Leadership Conference for sixty-five (65) youth.
- One (1) computer camp for 50 youth.
- One (1) Independent Living Training for therapeutic group home staff
- One (1) annual conference/training for selected DFCS field staff.
- Ongoing Independent Living training for DFCS field staff in the thirteen regions.

XVI. FINANCIAL AND STATISTICAL INFORMATION

A. Juvenile Justice Transfers

For FFY 2012, AFCARS identified 13 children that exited DFCS' custody who transferred to another agency.

B. Inter-Country Adoptions

During FFY 2012, there were 1523 ICPC cases handled either for placement of children from other states into Mississippi or placement of Mississippi children in other states with relatives. This number includes closures, approvals, Regulation 7 Priority Placements (expedited referrals

that must be completed in 20 workdays), disruptions and residential treatment facility placements. During FFY 2012, 480 ICPC adoption cases were handled. There were 127 international adoptions processed for adoptive purposes. During FFY 2012, ICPC processed a total of 2003 cases. The international cases are broken down as followed:

- Albania=9
- China=51
- Ukraine=12
- Nepal=13
- Russia=6
- Korea=13
- Taiwan=12
- Guatemala=6
- Ethiopia=5

* Mississippi only approved the home studies going to USCIS. USCIS determines how many children are allowed to be placed in the home. All other services were handled through immigration office. As of December 1, 2012, Mississippi ICPC no longer process international adoption requests.

C. Child Welfare Demonstration Projects

Mississippi does not have a child welfare demonstration project at this time.

D. Adoption Incentive Payments

In FFY 2012 Mississippi received \$ 407,109.00 in adoption incentive payments and finalized 417 adoptions in that same period. These funds were or will be used to:

- Provide equipment for the Resource Units. Equipment includes laptop computers, projectors, color printers, portable scanners, banners, and cameras.
- Send resource staff to national conferences and training events, such as National Foster Parent Conference, North America Conference on Adoptable Children Annual Conference, “Therapists as Adoption Specialists,” and “Lookin’ To The Future,” an annual conference in Mississippi with a dedicated adoption track.
- Present an annual Permanency Conference in MS that focuses on the importance of every child having a permanent family.
- Purchase updated MS PATH training manuals for each of the 13 regions;
- Purchase and implement a new home study format, the S.A.F.E. home study available through the Consortium for Children. Mississippi plans to implement a single, consistent home study format agency-wide and in subsequent years reach out to private providers to encourage them to use the same.
- Enhance the child-specific adoption recruitment services by adding a team of teen-focused adoption recruiters to work with the teens who are free for adoption.

E. Education and Training Voucher

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Total receiving funds	83	77	91	64	93
New Enrollment	45	16	57	43	31
Ongoing Enrollment	38	61	34	21	62

F. Financial Information

• Payment Limitations-Title IV-B, Subpart 1

10% of the federal share of costs allowed for administrative costs will not exceed \$342,440. Administrative costs will consist of those expenses incurred for DFCS Permanency staff housed at State Office. The Permanency Unit consists of two (2) sub-units that will be funded by the Child Welfare Services (CWS) grant; the sub-units are:

- The Congregate Care Unit is responsible for licensing and monitoring residential child care agencies as well as placing agencies in the State. This area is also responsible for performing licensure investigations following Abuse/Neglect/Exploitation (ANE) investigations which occur in group homes, therapeutic group homes or therapeutic resource homes.
- The Foster Care/Kinship Care Unit is responsible for the coordination and facilitation of implementing Permanency Round Tables (PRT) statewide and monitoring unlicensed placements statewide. This area will also be responsible for developing and implementing a Kinship Care Program for the State.

90% of the federal share of costs, not to exceed \$3,081,964, will be allocated to pay foster care maintenance payments for children in the custody of the State. Maintenance costs allocated to the CWS grant will be for those expenses incurred on behalf of children placed in licensed relative/resource homes.

The State will provide \$1,141,468 in non-federal matching funds for administrative costs and foster care maintenance payments.

For comparison purposes, the amount of Title IV-B, subpart 1 federal funding that the State expended for child care, foster care maintenance and adoption assistance payments in FY 2005 was \$3,769,621; the amount of non-Federal funds the state expended for foster care maintenance payments and applied as match for the Title IV-B, subpart 1 program in FY 2005 was \$1,256,540.

- **Payment Limitation-Title IV-B, Subpart 2**

10% of the federal share of costs allowed for administrative costs will not exceed \$453,926. Administrative costs will consist of those expenses incurred for DFCS Adoption and Resource Development staff housed at State Office.

- The Adoption Unit is responsible for providing administrative support to resource workers and their supervisors in each of the State's thirteen regions, which includes: (1) process consent to Adopt & Affidavit requests; (2) process attorney letter requests for legal documents; (3) process monthly adoption assistance payroll; (4) process legal fees for payment for adoption finalizations; (5) maintain adoption website; (6) coordinate segments with local news station for Wednesday's Child (news segment featuring foster children seeking adoptive families); (7) maintain tracking system for all children who are free for adoption; (8) review Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) packets for submission to Attorney General's Office or presentation to the Direct Advisory Committee for Permanency Planning (DACOPP); and coordinate Adoption events.
- The Resource Development Unit is responsible for enhancing the service array for children and families throughout the state to: (1) ensure children entering the foster care system receive physical, comprehensive physical and mental health assessments timely; (2) ensure dental exams occur timely for foster children ages three years and older; (3) develop a directory of resources for social workers to connect families and children to services within their communities; (4) ensure educational needs are being met; and (5) provide interpreter services and/or support to social workers statewide.

90% of the federal share of costs from Title IV-B, Subpart 2, funds will be allocated as follows: 30% Family Preservation, 20% Family Support, 20% Time-Limited Reunification, and 20% Adoption Promotion and Support.

- \$3,177,484 of the federal share of costs will be allocated to fund the Comprehensive Family Support Services Program (CFSSP) to deliver an array of comprehensive, intensive treatment and wrap-around services to children and families involved in prevention, protection or foster care caseloads serviced by DFCS case workers. This program encompasses Family Support Services, Family Preservation Services and Time-Limited Reunification Services based on the identified needs of children and families to ensure the safety, permanency and well-being of children statewide.

DFCS will make every effort to ensure a minimum of 20% will be allocated to Family Support Services and Time-Limited Reunification; however, the number of clients served for each category is dependent upon the number of referrals received from the local field offices based on the needs of the children and families within their local communities. As a result of the referral based system, client needs tend to fluctuate from year-to-year and DFCS cannot determine what those needs will be in advance. Based upon prior year trends, DFCS anticipates an increased demand for

Family Preservation Services which could reduce the demand for clients in need of Family Support Services and Time-Limited Reunification Services.

- \$907,852 of the federal share of costs will be allocated to fund the Adoption Promotion and Support Services Program which provides adoptive families an opportunity to participate in support groups and intensive in-home services to prevent disruptions. These services are provided to clients through a subgrant agreement between DFCS and the service provider selected through the State's procurement process. These funds are also utilized to host an Adoption Celebration Picnic in conjunction with various community partners.

In addition to the services referenced above, DFCS is utilizing Adoption Promotion funds to launch the "100 Longest Waiting Teens" Initiative. This initiative includes a specialized team which consists of adoption specialists skilled in working with teens with no desire to be adopted. This team will work with a specific population of foster children, teens, free for adoption with no identified adoptive placement and who are resistant to adoption. Adoption Specialists working on this team will engage youth, placement resource, staff, and community to seek permanency for each youth with a goal of finalizing an adoption prior to aging out of foster care. Each member of this specialized team will be assigned a caseload, not to exceed ten (10) youth.

The State will provide \$1,513,087 in non-federal matching funds for administrative and program costs.

The 1992 base year amount for Title IV-B, Subpart 2, Promoting Safe and Stable Families grant required to meet the non-supplantation requirements in Section 432(a)(7)(A) of the act for the State of Mississippi is \$900,347. In FFY 2011, Mississippi had State and Local expenditures in the amount of \$1,742,120 that exceeded the non-supplantation amount.

Monthly Caseworker Visits, Title IV-B, Subpart 2, funds under Promoting Safe and Stable Families will be utilized to provide Intensive Supervisory Support activities that will build the capacity of county supervisors to manage the work, lead change efforts in their counties and help their staff to perform consistently at high levels of quality work with children and families. The supervisory training is focused on improving the quality of supervision with the goal of improving upon the quality of work done in the field. The supervisors will be presented with data regarding their units that will speak to quality visits with children. Individual professional development plans will be developed with supervisors regarding underlying conditions, barriers, and needs that result in unsuccessful visits. Coaches will determine the skills that can be built by training and targeted specific coaching that will improve direct practice, including quality visits. Supervision is the link that needs to be enhanced that will lead to quality visits.

DFCS continues to explore initiatives that will capitalize on training and tools which strategically improve the quality and quantity of face-to-face visits with children and their families; as well as, focusing on the recruitment and retention of caseworkers.

In FFY 2011, Mississippi had federal share expenditures in the amount of \$311,008 and non-federal matching funds in the amount of \$103,669.

XVII. CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES REVIEWS

The May 17-21, 2010 Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) was conducted on site in Hinds, DeSoto and Lauderdale Counties in Mississippi.

2010 CFSR Outcome Findings

The 2010 CFSR identified the following areas of high performance with regard to the State's performance in achieving the outcomes assessed during the review:

- Items pertaining to repeat maltreatment and foster care reentry were rated as Strengths for the State.
- The State met the national standards for the data indicators pertaining to (1) absence of maltreatment recurrence, (2) timeliness and permanency of reunification, (3) timeliness of adoptions, and (4) permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods.
- Although the State's performance on Safety Outcome 1 (Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect) did not meet the required 95 percent level for substantial conformity, performance on this outcome was fairly high, with the outcome being substantially achieved in 85.7 percent of the cases.
- Although the State's performance on the items pertaining to timeliness of investigations, proximity of placement, placement with siblings, and physical health of the child did not reach the 90 percent level required for an overall rating of Strength, these items were rated as Strengths in over 87 percent of the cases.

The State did not meet the national standards for the data indicators pertaining to (1) absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff and (2) placement stability.

The CFSR evaluated state performance on seven outcome areas and Mississippi did not achieve substantial conformity with any of the seven child welfare outcomes for safety, permanency, and well-being. The CFSR documented several areas of concern, including the following:

Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect was substantially achieved in 85.7 percent of the applicable cases.

Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS) was found to be inconsistent in its efforts to address the safety of children who come into contact with the child welfare system. A key finding was that MDHS was not consistent in regard to initiating investigations within the State's time frames.

Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible was achieved in 42.2 percent of the applicable cases reviewed.

This raised concerns that some children are not being sufficiently protected from risk of harm while in their own homes due to the insufficiency or lack of preventative and in-home services. There are concerns that children remain at risk in the home due to services not targeting the key safety concern for the family or no services being provided.

Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situation was substantially achieved in 25 percent of the 40 foster care cases reviewed.

Although Mississippi met the national standard for the data indicators pertaining to timeliness and permanency of reunification, timeliness of adoptions, and permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods, the State did not meet the national standard for the data indicator pertaining to placement stability.

Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children, was substantially achieved in 30.8 percent of the 40 foster care cases reviewed.

The CFSR findings indicated that MDHS did not make concerted efforts to ensure that children in foster care are placed, when appropriate, in close proximity to their parents and communities of origin. Also, MDHS was not consistent in its efforts to (1) place siblings together; (2) establish frequent visitation between children in foster care and their parents and siblings; (3) preserve connections for children in foster care with their neighborhood, community, school, friends, extended family or faith; (4) seek maternal and paternal relatives as potential placement resources; and (5) promote or maintain a strong, emotionally-supportive relationship between children in foster care and their parents.

Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs, was substantially achieved in only 15.6 percent of the 64 cases reviewed.

CFSR findings for this outcome indicated that MDHS is not consistent in (1) meeting the service needs of children, parents, and foster parents; (2) involving children and parents in the case planning process; and (3) establishing face-to-face contact with children and parents with sufficient frequency to ensure children's safety and well-being.

Well-Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs, was substantially achieved in 73.8 percent of the applicable cases. The CFSR findings cited that MDHS did not consistently address the educational needs of children in in-home cases where there was clear evidence that the child(ren) in the family had education-related needs. Stakeholders noted that when educational needs were not being met it was due primarily to large caseloads and/or a lack of effective collaboration between MDHS and local school systems.

Well-being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs was achieved in only 67.2 percent of applicable cases.

A key CFSR finding with regard to this outcome was that MDHS is not consistent in its efforts to meet children's physical or mental health needs. Identified concerns pertained to a lack of dentists who will accept Medicaid.

CFSR Systemic Factor Findings

Mississippi was found to be in substantial conformity with two of the seven systemic factors, which included Agency responsiveness to the Community and Staff and Provider Training. The state did not achieve substantial conformity with five of the systemic factors, including Statewide Information System; Case Review System; Quality Assurance System; Service Array, Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention.

Stakeholders reported that inadequate staff and large caseloads have an adverse effect on achieving several of the systemic factors. Large caseloads and inadequate support staff are prohibiting social workers from entering timely information into the State's statewide information system called the Mississippi Automated Child Welfare Information System (MACWIS). Staff vacancies within MDHS and the Attorney General's office was also identified as a major constraint in the timely filing of Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) petitions and the search for absent parents. These staffing issues also influence the agency's ability to meet the required monthly visits to foster homes. Stakeholders also expressed concern that staffing issues were a barrier to implementing Quality Assurance efforts consistently throughout the State.

The State does not currently have a sufficient array of services in place to address the needs of children and families. Critical gaps in the service array include foster homes (for children of all ages), substance abuse and mental health services for children, youth, and parents. CFSR findings further indicated services are not accessible in all political jurisdictions of the State and that MDHS has limited ability to individualize services for the children and families served by the agency.

Mississippi Child and Family Services Review Program Improvement Plan

Mississippi entered a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) following the Child and Family Services Review in May 2010. The PIP was approved and implemented April 1, 2011 since Mississippi did not achieve two of the National Standards for Safety Outcome 1:

Absence of Maltreatment of Children in Foster Care

Therefore, a negotiated improvement goal of 98.23% was agreed upon (National Standard 99.68). As of Fifth Quarter (June 30, 2012) of the PIP, Mississippi exceeded the negotiated goal with 98.41% absence of maltreatment of children in foster care.

Placement Stability*

Therefore a negotiated improvement goal of 89.5 was agreed upon (National Standard 101.5). As of Quarter Eight of the PIP (March 31, 2013), Mississippi has not attained the negotiated goal,

but has attained 87.8% placement stability. This item will continue to be measured in the non-overlapping year of reporting.

The following Item-Specific and Quantitative Measurements were areas needing improvement commencing the PIP:

Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment*

Negotiated improvement goal is 81.4%; As of the Eight Quarter of the PIP (March 31, 2013), Mississippi has not met this goal, but has reached 80.3% for the Mississippi Child Welfare Practice Model Regions I-N; I-S; II-W; III-S; IV-N; IV-S; and V-W. This item will continue to be measured in the non-overlapping year of reporting.

Item 3: Services to Family to Protect Children in the Home and Prevent Removal or Re-Entry into Foster Care.

Negotiated improvement goal is 85.7%; As of the Fifth Quarter of the PIP, Mississippi has exceeded this goal at 88.5% for the Mississippi Child Welfare Practice Model Regions I-N; I-S; II-W; III-S; IV-N; IV-S; and V-W.

Item 4: Risk Assessment and Safety Management

Negotiated improvement goal is 71.4%; As of the Fourth Quarter of the PIP, Mississippi has exceeded this goal at 72.5% for the Mississippi Child Welfare Practice Model Regions I-N; I-S; II-W; III-S; IV-N; IV-S; and V-W.

Item 5 (CFSR 17): Needs and Services of Child, Parents, and Foster Parents

Negotiated improvement goal is 22.0%; As of the Third Quarter of the PIP, Mississippi has exceeded this goal at 22.56% for the Mississippi Child Welfare Practice Model Regions I-N; I-S; II-W; III-S; IV-N; IV-S; and V-W.

Item 7 (CFSR 18): Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning

Negotiated improvement goal is 16.2%; As of the Fourth Quarter of the PIP, Mississippi has exceeded this goal at 17.9% for the Mississippi Child Welfare Practice Model Regions I-N; I-S; II-W; III-S; IV-N; IV-S; and V-W.

Item 8 (CFSR 19): Caseworker Visits with Child*

Re-Negotiated improvement goal is 69.4%; As of the Eight Quarter of the PIP (March 31, 2013), Mississippi has not met this goal, but has reached 56.5% for the Mississippi Child Welfare Practice Model Regions I-N; I-S; II-W; III-S; IV-N; IV-S; and V-W. This item will continue to be measured in the non-overlapping year of reporting.

Item 9 (CFSR 20): Caseworker Visits with Parent

Negotiated improvement goal is 23.9%; As of the Fifth Quarter of the PIP, Mississippi has exceeded this goal at 27.9% for the Mississippi Child Welfare Practice Model Regions I-N; I-S; II-W; III-S; IV-N; IV-S; and V-W.

Item 10 (CFSR 7): Permanency Goal for Child

Negotiated improvement goal is 45.2%; As of the Fifth Quarter of the PIP, Mississippi has exceeded this goal at 46.9% for the Mississippi Child Welfare Practice Model Regions I-N; I-S; II-W; III-S; IV-N; IV-S; and V-W.

Item 16 (CFSR 10): Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement*

Negotiated improvement goal is 78.5%; As of the Eight Quarter of the PIP (March 31, 2013), Mississippi has not met this goal, but has reached 75.9% for the Mississippi Child Welfare Practice Model Regions I-N; I-S; II-W; III-S; IV-N; IV-S; and V-W. This item will continue to be measured in the non-overlapping year of reporting.

*- Goal has not been obtained as of the Eighth Quarter of the PIP (March 31, 2013)

XVIII. INFORMATION ON CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICE WORKFORCE

The official activities of and services provided by DFCS Direct Service Workers – Child Welfare Services – compose DFCS “workload”. Workload is measured by computation of the amount of time required to provide or complete defined service-related activities and service types. Each service-related activity and service is assigned a workload value based on established weights and standards derived from the average amount of time determined to be required to adequately and effectively provide or complete the service-related activity or service type measured on a month-by-month basis.

Workload varies day-to-day, and is measured monthly. By determining the amount of time required each month based on reported workload and dividing the amount of time available by a Direct Service Worker each month to complete the work reported, the number of Direct Service Workers needed is determined. Workload is reported for each Direct Service Worker, each county, each Region, and Statewide, and the number of Direct Service Workers required to complete the work reported at each level – county, region, statewide – is therefore determined each month.

Caseworkers

The official standard for a full caseload at MDHS/DFCS is 100 Caseload Units which constitutes 6,960 workload minutes per month. This standard is derived from a determination that Direct Service Workers have 116 hours (6,960 minutes) of time each month to dedicate to official workload activity – that is, to caseload.

Acknowledgements:

- Total workload minutes in a caseload will vary month to month. The standard is based on monthly averages.

- Direct Service Workers will not be assigned cases or service-related activity which results in a caseload exceeding the standard for a full caseload. Caseloads will on occasion, and at specific points in time, on a Worker-by-Worker basis, fail to reach or may exceed the standard.
- Workloads shall be measured monthly and adjustments made as needed.

Continuous effort must be expended by the Regional Directors (RDs) and Area Social Work Supervisors (ASWSs) to:

- Maintain individual caseloads that are within a reasonable range of the standard (within 15 Caseload Units),
- Assure that no Direct Service Worker remains over the standard for an extended length of time,
- Document justification for a Direct Service Worker being assigned cases which results in an over-full caseload, and
- Demonstrate and document efforts taken to reduce the caseload to the official standard.

Supervisors

Supervisors shall be directly responsible for no more than five Direct Service Workers. Supervisors shall not be assigned primary responsibility for providing direct casework services for any case except in cases of extenuating circumstances which shall last for no more than four weeks and have been approved in writing by the Office Director of Field Operations after consultation with the supervisor's RD to ensure the continued proper supervision of the impacted Direct Service Workers.

Regional Directors

RDs shall be responsible for the ongoing validation of cases and validation of workloads. They will ensure that all cases in an open status meet the policy criteria for that case type. They will ensure that valid workloads are distributed as fairly and evenly as possible. This validation will be accomplished through formal case and workload validation plans which will be developed jointly between RDs, ASWSs and state level program staff. These validation plans shall be developed annually and approved by the Office Director of Field Operations.

No supervisor shall be assigned primary responsibility for providing direct casework services for any case, except in cases of extenuating circumstances which shall last no more than four (4) weeks and have been approved in writing by the director of DFCS after consultation with the supervisor's Regional Director to ensure the continued proper supervision of the impacted direct service workers.

Service-Related Activities and Case Types

Service Types – and the assigned standard for each in minutes and Caseload Units are as follows:

<u>Service Type</u>	<u>Minutes</u>	<u>Caseload Units</u>
Adoption COS	300	4.3
ICPC Incoming	106	1.6
ICPC Outgoing	106	1.6
Placement COR	254	3.7
Placement R&S	507	7.3
Placement COS	253	3.6
Prevention COR	138	2.0
Prevention COS	137	2.0
Prevention R&S	275	4.0
Protection Services COR	210	3.0
Protection Services COS	200	2.9
Protection Services R&S	410	5.9
Case Management Intake	59	0.9
Court Ordered Relative Application	282	4.1
ICPC Application	282	4.1
Investigation Level 2	484	7.0
Investigation Level 3	484	7.0
General Intake	59	0.9
Resource Inquiry	59	0.9
Adoption Addendum	191	2.8
Foster Home Addendum	191	2.8
Resource Home Study	470	6.8
Resource Home Supervision	140	2.0
Resource Renewal	191	2.8

XIX. APPENDICES

- A: Children's Justice Act Annual Report and DFCS Response
- B. Health Care Services Plan
- C: Mississippi Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan
- D: Monthly Caseworker Visit Data – New FY 2007 Baseline Data
 - Monthly Caseworker Visit Data – FY 2008
 - Monthly Caseworker Visit Data – FY 2009
 - Monthly Caseworker Visit Data – FY 2010
 - Monthly Caseworker Visit Data – FY 2011
 - Monthly Caseworker Visit Data – FY 2012
- E: Quality Assurance System
- F. CAPTA Update and CAPTA Fatality and Near Fatality Public Disclosure