

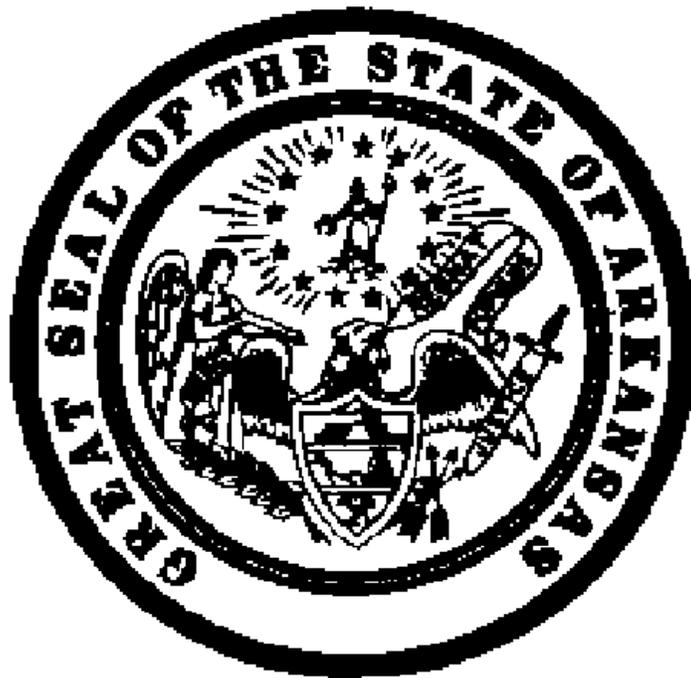
**State of Arkansas**

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**ANNUAL PROGRESS AND  
SERVICE REPORT**

**JUNE 30, 2001**

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Submitted to  
Administration for Children and Families  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
By  
Arkansas Department of Human Services  
Division of Children and Family Services  
P.O. Box 1437  
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**REPORT ON THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PROGRESS  
FFY 2001**

Requirement - A report on the specific accomplishments and progress made in the past fiscal year toward meeting each goal and objective, including improved outcomes for children and families, and a more comprehensive, coordinated, effective child and family services continuum. Any revisions in the statement of goals and objectives or to the training plan, if necessary, to reflect changed circumstances

**Goal 1: To ensure there is a system of prevention that reduces the number of families who enter the DCFS child welfare system (Project Prevention).**

**Objective 1: To identify families at risk for entering the DCFS child welfare system.** [Community Based Family Support, Family Preservation]

Outcome: To understand the characteristics of families that typically need child welfare services so that services can be designed to address the problems that would require their entry into the child welfare system.

*Task 1: Collect baseline data of families currently receiving child welfare services and produce a report identifying the characteristics of these families. Accomplish Date: Revised to December 31, 2001*

*STATUS - A draft report profiling families has been developed utilizing an analysis from the health, safety and risk assessment results. Staff from the Office of Community Services, the Office of Community Support and the Office of Legislative Analysis, Research and Planning are reviewing the draft report to identify other data needs. The CHRIS system will produce a final report describing the profiles of the children and families coming into the system.*

*Task 2: Develop a profile of families that may enter the DCFS child welfare system. Accomplish Date: Revised to March 30, 2002*

*STATUS – Once we receive a profile of families currently being served, we can then, utilizing state demographic data, identify families that may enter the Division.*

Lead Responsibility: Office of Community Support, Office of Community Services and Office of Legislative Analysis Research and Planning, Planning Unit.

Secondary Responsibility: Office of Systems and Technology - CHRIS

**Objective 2: To identify resources, which provide services to children and their families in each community.** [Community-Based Family Support, Family Preservation Services]

Outcome: To know the services that are already in place to serve children and their families and to prevent their need for entry into the child welfare system, so that unmet service needs can be identified and planned for.

***Task 1: Complete an inventory of available resources that offer services to children and their families (prevention, in-home and out-of-home) in each county. Accomplishment Date: June 30, 2000***

***STATUS - On target. A statewide, comprehensive need analysis of DCFS was completed. The purpose of the needs analysis was to identify existing resources as well as unmet needs. The results of the analysis were disseminated to DCFS staff in June 2000.***

***For out-of-home placement services, the Behavior Treatment Unit has updated the residential directory and will be disseminating this to the field staff.***

***The Division conducted several focus groups with consumers, foster youth, the Independent Living Youth Advisory Board, foster and adoptive parents. The feedback is being used to analyze service needs. Additionally, the Division participated in a survey of states and their rural counties for the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA). The results will identify service needs and service accessibility for children and families..***

Task 2: Develop a report identifying services currently available and unmet service needs, by county.  
Accomplish Date: ***Revised to September 30, 2002***

Lead Responsibility: Policy Unit, Planning Unit and the Office of Community Support  
Secondary Responsibility: Office of Community Services and Office of Systems and Technology - CHRIS

**Objective 3: To develop a system to inform DCFS county staff of available services.** [Community-Based Family Support, Family Preservation]

Outcome: Direct service staff will know of available resources so that they may appropriately refer children and families needing services.

***Task 1: Design a system for maintaining current resource information on CHRIS. Accomplish Date: June 30, 2000***

***STATUS – The CHRIS system includes a method for maintaining current resource information, but it was determined that there were problems with this system including; too many staff entering data, data entered erroneously and information was entered repeatedly. Work was done to clean up the data, and modifications were made to the system to restrict the entering of new contracted resources to designated staff only to allow putting information into the system was made. Once a final clean up of the resources and changes to how the information is catalogued is completed, the Contracts Unit staff will maintain the data.***

***In addition, the Contracts Unit will conduct a meeting with the Area Managers providing information about the upcoming contracts. The Contracts Unit staff will then meet individually in each Area with area staff to provide information about current contracted services. Also, reports of contract services will be sent periodically to each county.***

Primary Responsibility: Office of Finance and Administrative Support, Office of Community Support, and Offices of Systems and Technology - CHRIS  
Secondary Responsibility: Policy Unit and Planning Unit, Office of Community Services

**Objective 4: Develop a system to plan for needed resources that are not available.**

[Community-Based Family Support, Family Preservation]

Outcome: Services that are needed by children and their families will be developed to the extent possible.

***Task 1: Design a planning system for services that are needed, but not available, to the extent possible. Accomplish Date: Revise to June 30, 2002***

***STATUS - There are a number of resources that identify what services are needed e.g. Focus Group information, the Needs Analysis and the CWLA rural survey. Once the Division receives the survey by CWLA, the results will assist in formulating a planning system of services for children and families.***

Lead Responsibility: Planning Unit and Office of Community Support  
Secondary Responsibility: Office of Community Services

**Objective 5: To enhance the volunteer workforce to support the efforts of DCFS to reduce the number of families entering our system. [Community-Based Family Support, Family Preservation]**

Outcome 1: Increased manpower resources to prevent children and their families from unnecessarily entering the child welfare system.

Outcome 2: Decrease the number of families entering the child welfare system by 10%.

Task 1: Research and develop a plan for an enhanced DCFS volunteer program. Accomplish Date: ***Revise to January 1, 2002***

Task 2: Develop an evaluation tool for the program. Accomplish Date: ***Revise to March 31, 2002***

Task 3: Begin implementation of a pilot volunteer program in at least one county per DCFS area, ensuring diversity in population. Accomplish Date: ***Revise to July 1, 2002***

Task 4: Collect and analyze data on program performance. Evaluate results and make recommendations e.g., eliminate the program, revise the program, or replicate the program in other counties. Accomplish Date: ***Revise to January 1, 2003***

Task 5: If recommended, complete statewide implementation. Accomplish Date: July 1, 2004

Task 6: Issue a report on program progress and outcomes. Accomplish Date: July 1, 2004

Primary Responsibility: Policy Unit and Office of Community Support

Secondary Responsibility: Office of Community Services, Division of Volunteerism, CASA

## **Goal 2: Ensure DCFS' capacity to provide for the safety and well being of children and family members in the home.**

**Objective 1: Enhance Intensive Family Services (IFS) program statewide.** [Family Preservation, Time Limited Family Support]

Outcome 1: Reduce percentage of children who might be placed if intensive services are not available

Outcome 2: Reduce average time a child remains in out-of home care by 10%.

*Task 1: IFS Task Force will be formed with leadership from Central Office of Community Services and representatives from Professional Development, Contract Management Unit, Policy and Planning, Quality Assurance, Office of Community Services field staff and provider representatives. Accomplishment Date revised to: June 30, 2002*

*STATUS - Research and develop an information system identifying the families referred for IFS and the characteristics of those families. Strategy discussions have taken place with CHRIS staff and Quality Assurance staff to identify information sources on IFS families. The task was to be completed by June 30, 2001. The task is incomplete, as we have been unable to develop an accurate accounting of IFS families through the current information systems. Staff completed a comparison analysis using a list of IFS families identified in CHRIS and IFS families identified by contract providers and staff. The difference was significant. Efforts have been made to stress to DCFS staff the importance of accurate data input in CHRIS on IFS families. A task force will be formed to identify service delivery and service needs. The group will consist of staff from the field, a contracted IFS therapist, a staff IFS worker, county supervisor, and the Program Coordinator for IFS.*

Primary Responsibility: Office of Community Services and Office of Community Support, Planning Unit

Secondary Responsibility: Professional Development, Contract Management Unit, and Quality Assurance.

*Task 2: Monitor and evaluate services provided to IFS families.  
Accomplish Date: Revise June 30, 2002*

*STATUS - The Quality Assurance Unit produces an annual evaluation report on IFS. Data on the families receiving IFS in SFY 2000 has been compiled and the report will be issued shortly. Data on the outcomes for families*

***receiving IFS, Protective Services, or Supportive Services is collected and reported in the Quarterly Performance Report developed by the Quality Assurance Unit. Comparisons are made regarding true reports of child maltreatment and children entering foster care. The task was to be completed by June 30, 2001. The completion of the annual evaluation and the QPR address this task. A more indepth look at IFS families will be possible once the information system identifies IFS families more accurately***

Primary Responsibility: Office of Community Support

Secondary Responsibility: Professional Development, Contract Management Unit, Policy Unit and Quality Assurance, and Office of Community Services

***Task 3: Research available information on intensive family preservation services and programs consult with experts and with other states.***

***Accomplish Date: June 30, 2002***

***STATUS – Information on intensive family preservation services and programs has been researched/obtained from the following states: Alabama, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, New Jersey, and North Carolina. Information has also been researched with the following organizations: National Family Preservation Network, Child Welfare League, Behavioral Sciences Institute, Casey Family Programs, National Center on Family Group Decision Making, National Association for Family-Based Services, and National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice (Iowa). Technical assistance was requested from and has begun from the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice. While much has been done toward this task, research on intensive family preservation services and programs is an ongoing process. Information from this research will be shared with the task force in identifying and formulating plans for this program.***

Primary Responsibility: Office of Community Support and Office of Community Services

Secondary Responsibility: Professional Development, Contract Management Unit, Policy Unit, Planning Unit and Quality Assurance.

Task 4: Analyze, design, and implement plans to increase the availability of IFS statewide. Apply results of research and monitoring/evaluation of the IFS program regarding practice, policy, and contractual performance indicators

Accomplish Date: July 30, 2002

Primary Responsibility: Office of Community Support

Secondary Responsibility: Professional Development, Contract Management Unit, Policy Unit and Quality Assurance.

**Objective 2: Develop and maintain a statewide, county by county, automated directory of service providers (contracted and non-contracted).** [Family Preservation, Time-Limited Reunification]

Outcome 1: More timely placement of children when necessary.

Outcome 2: Better and more timely matching of families needs to available resources.

*Task 1: Design a system for maintaining current resource information on CHRIS.*

*Accomplish Date: Jan 1, 2002*

*STATUS – The CHRIS system includes a method for maintaining current resource information, but it was determined that there were problems with this system including; too many staff entering data, data entered erroneously and information was entered repeatedly. Work was done to clean up the data, and modifications were made to the system to restrict the entering of new contracted resources to designated staff only to allow putting information into the system was made. Once a final clean up of the resources and changes to how the information is catalogued is completed, the Contracts Unit staff will maintain the data.*

*In addition, the Contracts Unit will conduct a meeting with the Area Managers providing information about the upcoming contracts. The Contracts Unit staff will then meet individually in each Area with area staff to provide information about current contracted services. Also, reports of contract services will be sent periodically to each county.*

Lead Responsibility: Office of Systems and Technology - CHRIS, Office of Legislative Analysis Research and Planning, Office of Finance and Administrative Support

Secondary Responsibility: Office of Community Services, Office of Community Support and Office of Finance and Administrative Support

**Objective 3: Develop a system to plan for development of needed resources for in-home service delivery.** [Family Preservation]

*Task 1: Based on resource identification (Goal 1, Objective 2), develop a report identifying in-home services currently available and those needed, but not available, by county. Accomplish Date: Revise September 30, 2002*

*STATUS – There are a number of resources that identify what services are needed, e.g. Focus Group information, the Needs Analysis and the CWLA Rural survey. CHRIS will produce a report of in-home services currently being used. Using the CHRIS report, the Needs Analysis, the Focus Group input and the CWLA Rural county survey, the Division will develop a report that identifies services needed by county.*

Lead Responsibility: Policy Unit and Planning Unit, Office of Community Support  
Secondary Responsibility: Office of Community Services and Office of Systems and Technology - CHRIS

Task 2: Design a planning system for services that are needed, but not available, to the extent possible.  
Accomplish Date: *Revised to June 30, 2002*

Lead Responsibility: Office of Legislative Analysis Research and Planning - Planning Unit  
Secondary Responsibility: Office of Community Services and Office of Community Services

***Goal 3: Ensure DCFS' capacity to provide services focused on the health, safety, and reunification or other permanency goals for children in out-of-home placement.***

**Objective 1: Increase the number of foster homes by 20%. The increase will include foster homes that will accept children that DCFS has historically found difficult to place (e.g., males, teens, sibling groups, etc.) and will reflect the ethnic/racial diversity of the children entering foster care [Family Preservation, Time-Limited Reunification]**

Outcome 1: More timely placements.

Outcome 2: Fewer disrupted placements.

Outcome 3: More timely achievement of reunification or other permanency goals.

***Task 1: County DCFS offices will define the number and types of foster homes needed, but do not have them. Accomplish Date: January 1, 2000. On-going***

***STATUS – On target. The goal of the Division is to recruit 80 new homes per quarter. DCFS has exceeded that number of homes recruited for the year. In January – March 2000 the state recruited 123 homes, in April – June 2000, the state recruited 110 homes, in July –September 2000 the state recruited 120 homes, and in October – December the state recruited 67 homes.***

Primary Responsibility: Office of Community Support and Office of Community Services  
Secondary Responsibility Office of Finance and Administrative Support – Contracts Unit

***Task 2: A plan will be developed for each county and for the state, to recruit the types of homes that are needed. Accomplish Date: February 1, 2000***

***STATUS – On target. Each Area Manager submitted a Foster Family Needs Assessment for each county. This needs assessment identified the types of foster homes needed for each county. This was provided to the Foster Parent Recruiters to use, as a guide for the types of homes needed to be recruited. This assessment is completed annually.***

Primary Responsibility: Office of Community Support

Secondary Responsibility: Office of Finance and Administrative Support – Contracts Unit, MidSOUTH

**Objective 2: A system of mental health services will be developed.**

[Family Preservation, Time-Limited Reunification, Adoption Support]

Outcome 1: Children and their families will receive better mental health services.

Outcome 2: Children entering foster care because they need mental health services will be reduced.

*Task 1: Develop a system for mental health services for foster children and other children served by the Division. Accomplish Date: July 1, 2001*

*STATUS –DCFS is working with the Divisions of Mental Health, Youth Services, Medical Services and Developmental Disabilities, Council of Community Mental Health Centers and other providers to develop a transition plan for mental health services for foster children. The Division of Mental Health and DCFS developed agreements with 13 Community Mental Health Centers for timely basic services to be offered to all children in the custody of the Division. These services include assessment/evaluation, counseling and case management services, with a provision for joint planning for other needed services. A statewide mental health collaborative has been formed to plan for mental health services for foster children. A local collaborative for Pulaski County between the Division, the Division of Mental Health, local providers including Community Mental Health Centers has been formed to identify and coordinate mental health service needs for foster children in this county.*

Primary Responsibility: Legislative Analysis, Research and Planning

Secondary Responsibility: Quality Assurance, Division of Mental Health, Community Mental Health Providers

**Objective 3: Create a system of support for adoptive parents, including Adoptive Parents Support Groups in each DCFS area, and a statewide newsletter on adoption that could be distributed to adoptive parents and adoption-related community service providers and advocates and other appropriate people and organizations. [Adoption Support]**

Outcome 1: Fewer disrupted adoptions.

Outcome 2: Greater availability of adoptive parents.

*Task 1: Develop and implement a plan for the creation and support of at least one adoptive parent support group in each DCFS area. Accomplish Date revised to: November 30, 2001*

*STATUS – On target. Areas II, V and X have develop adoption support groups at this time. Areas IV, VII, VIII, X, and I established at least one adoptive parent support group and Area III and Area VI are making plans to establish a support group.*

Primary Responsibility: Office of Community Support, UALR School of Social Work  
Secondary Responsibility: Policy Unit

***Task 2: Develop a statewide newsletter on adoption. Accomplish Date revised to: October 30, 2001***

***STATUS – Some planning for a statewide newsletter has occurred, but the task has not been completed. The newsletter will initially be available on the DHS/DCFS adoption web site.***

Primary Responsibility: Office of Community Support  
Office of Community Services, UALR School of Social Work

**Objective 4: To ensure the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanency placements for waiting children. [Adoption Support]**

Outcome 1: No adoption will be delayed or denied when an approved family is available outside the jurisdiction with responsibility for handling the case of the child.

Outcome 2: An increase in the adoption rate annually of 10% by 2001.

Task 1: Research the Criteria and Approval Standards for adoptive families in other states. Accomplish Date: July 1, 2000

STATUS – Task completed. There is a process that is currently used by the Adoptions Unit to make adoption placements in other states. If an appropriate adoptive family is located in another state, a home study is requested from the licensed agency that approved the family as an adoptive family. If the home study reveals that the home does not meet all standards, then a plan is coordinated with ICPC to bring the home into compliance. Efforts are in process to register information about waiting children on the National Adoption Exchange (Faces of Adoption). Approved adoption home studies on families from other states continue to be registered.

Primary Responsibility: Office of Community Support, Policy Unit  
Secondary Responsibility: Office of Community Services

***Task 2: Review the ICPC process to determine barriers to timely placement and make recommendations to address those barriers. Accomplish Date: April 1, 2000***

***STATUS – Task completed. The ICPC unit has an automated system to track all in- state and out of state referrals better. The Interstate Compact on Juveniles will be handle by the Division of Youth Services on July 1, 2000. ICPC staffs were cross-trained, and cases are distributed with one worker having A to L and M to Z. The unit has worked off a backlog of referrals. Clear procedures and time frames have been developed to process referrals.***

Primary Responsibility: Office of Community Support  
Secondary Responsibility: Quality Assurance, Policy Unit

Task 3: Research the current usage of finders' fee for adoption of children with special needs and prepare a report with recommendation. Accomplish Date: July 1, 2000

*Task 4: If decision is made to utilize finders' fees, develop plan to do so, including determination of fee scale, contract or agreement. Accomplish Date: Revise to January 1, 2002*

***STATUS – Our ACF Regional Representative has advised us that IV-B monies should not be utilized for this purpose and that the use of IV-E monies should be considered. Plans are being made to coordinate with the Divisions' Chief Financial Officer to discuss the availability of IV-E administrative monies to use for finder's fees.***

Primary Responsibility: Office of Community Support, Policy Unit

Secondary Responsibility: Office of Community Services

**Objective 5: To ensure compliance with ASFA transition rules for filing a petition to terminate parental rights when a child has been in Foster Care 15 of the most recent 22 months**

Outcome: TPR petitions will be filed unless a compelling reason exists on 1/3 of all cases by October 29, 1999; 2/3 of all cases by April 29, 2000; and on all of the cases by October 29, 2000.

Task 1: Workers in conjunction with Office of Chief Counsel will conduct Permanency Planning Hearings in accordance to policy.

Task 2: OCC will review 100% of their cases in July 1999, to assure compliance.

Task 3: CHRIS will continue the development of a monitoring tool to track children in care 15 of 22 months.

Task 4: DCFS will coordinate efforts with the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) to implement ASFA requirements. Accomplish Date: October 29, 2000

STATUS – Completed. The Office of Chief Council (OCC) has reviewed all cases, CHRIS produces a Permanency Planning Detail report on a monthly basis for OCC and area staff, and efforts are currently being coordinated with the Administrative Offices of the Courts. In addition, The DHS Office of Chief Counsel (OCC) Central Legal Office (CLO) has instituted a process to track Permanency Planning Hearings (PPH) to assure compliance with state and federal law:

An eleventh-month printout has been created to assure that all PPH proceedings are held in a timely manner. This monthly report acts as a warning flag to let us know what juveniles are due a PPH within the following month.

CLO sends E-mail notification to each attorney letting him know what juveniles are due a PPH during the upcoming month. They are asked to respond by confirming that these cases are due and by giving CLO the actual hearing date scheduled. If they have not scheduled a hearing, they are required to tell CLO why (it may be that the case doesn't need a PPH because the case is closed or the juvenile has

already returned home). If the juvenile needs a PPH and one has not been scheduled, the attorney does so immediately and informs CLO of the date set.

Since this is an ongoing process, this systematic procedure will eliminate juveniles overdue for a PPH, therefore assuring CLO compliance with ASFA.

CLO also focuses on the quality of court orders reflecting what happened at the Permanency Planning Hearing. Therefore, for a period of time, CLO is reviewing all PPH court orders for quality.

Attorneys are required to send the CLO Coordinator a copy of the PPH orders by the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month following the PPH proceeding. This sets up an automatic review of the orders with our Deputy Counsel and the Managing Attorney.

In addition, attorneys are required by OCC to provide a monthly report to their Managing Attorney reviewing child welfare court appearances. These appearances are reported by county and include the number of days in court in that county. Also reported monthly are the number of cases in which child support is ordered or denied, the number of cases in which reimbursement for services is ordered or denied and the number of emergency cases handled.

Primary Responsibility - Office of Community Services, Office of Chief Counsel, Coordination with Administrative Offices of the Court

#### ***Goal 4: Enhance automated systems to increase the agency's capacity to administer and manage fiscal and programmatic requirements.***

**Objective 1: Enhance CHRIS fiscal capabilities to allow for payment of foster care board and adoption subsidies, for tracking obligations against appropriations/budgets, and for production of monthly fiscal status reports.**

Outcome: More appropriate utilization of taxpayers money by the availability of more timely and accurate financial information. Accomplish Date: June 30, 2000

***Task 1: CHRIS will be enhanced to allow for payment of foster care board and adoption subsidies and be able to track expenditures from the system. June 30, 2000***

***STATUS – The Foster Care Board Payments and Adoption Subsidies programming changes are in place to revise board payment information in CHRIS. Also as part of this financial process, the Foster Care Trust Accounting process is being transferred to a new accounting system. The Trust Account function has been added to the CHRIS system. It provides field staff daily updates on the amount in a child's trust account. It also balances the account when money has been used for the child.***

Primary Responsibility: Office of Finance and Administrative Support, Office of System & Technology

Secondary Responsibility: Office of Community Services, Policy and Planning

**Objective 2: Enhance CHRIS so that it is a complete and accurate directory of service resources.**

Outcome 1: Improved services to clients through instant accessibility to resources for field or organizational staff.

Outcome 2: Ability to accurately report data to key management areas.

Outcome 3: Enhanced ability for accurate program & fiscal planning.

*Task 1: CHRIS will be enhanced to allow for field staff to access information about resources. Accomplish Date: Revised to June 30, 2002*

*Status - The CHRIS system includes a method for maintaining current resource information, but it was determined that there were problems with this system including; too many staff entering data, data entered erroneously and information was entered repeatedly. Work was done to clean up the data, and modifications were made to the system to restrict the entering of new contracted resources to designated staff only to allow putting information into the system was made. Once a final clean up of the resources and changes to how the information is catalogued is completed, the Contracts Unit staff will maintain the data.*

Primary responsibility: Office of Finance and Administrative Support, Office of Systems & Technology

Secondary responsibility: Office of Community Support, Office of Community Services

**Objective 3: Identify and train staff responsible for maintaining and updating the resources within the directory.**

Outcome 1: Improved services to clients through instant accessibility to resources for field/organizational staff.

Outcome 2: Ability to accurately report data to key management areas.

Outcome 3: Enhanced ability for accurate program & fiscal planning.

Task 1: Identify staff responsible for maintaining and updating resources. Accomplish Date: *Revise to Jan 30, 2002*

*Task 2: Train staff responsible for maintaining and updating resources. Accomplish Date: Revise to June 30, 2002*

*STATUS for task 1 and 2 - Work was done to clean up the data, modifications were made to the system to restrict the entering of new contracted resources to designated staff (CHRIS Helpdesk staff only). Once a final clean up of the resources and resource catalogue is complete, the Contracts Unit staff will be trained to maintain the data.*

Primary Responsibility: CHRIS, Office of Systems & Tech., and MidSOUTH

Secondary Responsibility: Community Service

**Objective 4: Develop an automated eligibility determination system.**

- Outcome 1: Elimination of duplication of effort in eligibility determination.
- Outcome 2: Compliance with SACWIS regulations.
- Outcome 3: Timely eligibility determination.

*Task 1: Design and develop the automated eligibility determination system. Accomplish Date: Revise to Jan 30, 2002*

*STATUS - The specifications, design and construction has been completed for an Eligibility Determination function. It is in pilot in one area. After the testing has been approved and necessary changes made, the function will be statewide by the end of the calendar year.*

Primary Responsibility: Office of Financial and Administrative Services, and Office of Systems & Technology

**Objective 5: Increase CHRIS' ability to produce ad hoc reports.**

- Outcome 1: Improved services to clients through organizational ability to have information to use in planning for service delivery.
- Outcome 2: Quicker response time for answering requests for information.
- Outcome 3: Increased ability to monitor compliance with state/federal regulations.

*Task 1: Design and implement DCFS' ability to produce ad hoc reports. Accomplish Date: June 30, 2000*

*STATUS - Internal Intranet report distribution has been introduced this fiscal year. Also, reporting tools have been implemented which have increased the ad hoc ability for technical staff. Working with the reporting groups across DHS, a reporting database has been built with a production cycle, which improves the amount of time, needed to produce standard point-in-time reports. The CHRIS system continues to work on producing management reports to the Division.*

Primary Responsibility: LARP and Office of System Technology  
Secondary Responsibility: Office of Community Services and Office of Community Support

**Objective 6: Develop automated financial contract monitoring system. (The Cougar System will be used to help address system development.)**

Outcome: Increase quality of services received through contract funding.

Task 1: Design an automated financial contract monitoring system. Accomplish Date: Revise to June 30, 2002

Primary Responsibility: Office of Financial and Administrative Services, Division of Administrative Services  
Secondary Responsibility: Office of Community Services, Office of Systems and Technology - CHRIS staff

**Objective 7: Automated Program Needs Assessment.**

Outcome: Increase quality of services through improved planning that is made possible by information obtained through an automated needs assessment.

Task 1: Design an automated program needs assessment. Accomplish Date: June 30, 2003

Primary Responsibility: LARP, Office of Systems and Technology - CHRIS staff  
Secondary Responsibility: Office of Financial and Administrative Services, Office of Community Services

**Objective 8: Develop "Smart Card: Electronic Benefit Transfer System" for all families/children serviced by DCFS.**

Outcome: Improved services through automated ability to purchase goods and services for foster children

Task 1: Develop system for use of smart card; plan for training staff and foster parents.  
Accomplish Date: June 30, 2004

Primary Responsibility: Office of Financial and Administrative Services  
Secondary Responsibility: Office of Community Services, Office of Systems and Technology - CHRIS Staff

***Goal 5: The Division of Children and Family Services will recruit, train and retain qualified staff in sufficient numbers to meet family centered and supervisory standards.***

**Objective 1: Development of a positive recruitment plan and promotional packet.**

Outcome: Improved service delivery.

***Task 1: Enhancement of web-site pages listing current vacancies within DCFS. Accomplish Date: June 1, 2000***

***STATUS – Accomplished. The Department of Human Services web site has page with a listing of all vacancies, continuously advertised positions, and pay scale instructions on how to apply for job and the job application.***

***DCFS will work with DHS to link DCFS job information to the DCFS web site so that it is more accessible to those who are unfamiliar with the state system.***

Primary Responsibility: Office of Financial and Administrative Services, Staff Development, and LARP  
Secondary Responsibility: Office of Community Services

Task 2: Removal of negative language contained in the Career Opportunities Bulletin has been accomplished.

Accomplish Date: March 1, 2000

Primary Responsibility: Office of Financial and Administrative Services  
Secondary Responsibility: Office of Community Services

**Objective 2: In collaboration with the university partnerships (UALR and UAF), DCFS will develop and implement a division-wide plan for leadership development, including case supervisory training and a career track for child welfare management.**

Outcome 1: Improved services through better-trained and qualified staff.

Outcome 2: Decrease in contempt of court citations.

Outcome 3: Decrease in error rate in Quality Assurance.

Outcome 4: Increase in percentages on the Compliance Outcome Report.

Outcome 5: The rate of cases that close, and remain closed will increase.

Task 1: Creation of a curriculum for leadership development.

Accomplish date: *Revise to June 30, 2002*

Primary Responsibility: LARP, UAF, and UALR/MidSOUTH  
Secondary Responsibility: Office of Community Services

**Objective 3: The Division will develop a competency based training program.**

Outcome: Improved services through quality training that is more focused to worker's particular needs

*Task 1: Work continues on developing competency-based training.*

*Accomplish Date: June 30, 2002*

***STATUS - The curriculum for pre-service FSW training was revised in 2001 to incorporate CHRIS training and to alter contents to reflect FPU role in investigations. The curriculum is based on a competency model and is measurable. In addition, an Individual Training Needs Assessment has been developed and it is being used. Both the worker and their supervisor complete it to identify the workers training needs and develop a training plan. A revised competency based curriculum for new Family Service Worker (FSW) training was piloted in the spring of 2001. Evaluation of this pilot was positive and the decision was made to adopt it for statewide use.***

Primary Responsibility: Office of Legislative Analysis Research and Planning, UALR/MidSOUTH, Office of Community Services  
Secondary Responsibility: Office of Financial and Administrative Services,

**Objective 4: The Division will develop worker incentive initiatives.**

Outcome: Improved services through retention of trained workers.

*Task 1: Options to assure staffing standard of 15 cases per worker will be developed, addressing vacancy ratios. Accomplish Date: July 1, 2000*

***STATUS – The Workload Analysis, a data collection methodology, will be used to measure the “workloads” of the family service workers. The data collection began in February 2001. A report of the results of will be prepared by the end of June 2001.***

Primary Responsibility: Planning, and Quality Assurance - LARP

Secondary Responsibility: Office of Community Services

*Task 2: Causes of worker stress will be reviewed, and options to decrease stress recommended. Accomplish Date: Revise July 1, 2003*

***STATUS – The Planning Unit completed an analysis why staff leaves the Division. The results can be used to determine how the agency can attract and retain qualified employees, particularly child welfare workers assigned to the field. 10 to 12 percent of positions in the Family Service Worker classifications are vacant at any time, with resulting staff shortages and heavy caseloads being assigned to existing workers. In order to satisfy requirements of the Angela R. Settlement Agreement, the Division must ensure that worker-to-caseload ratios achieve mandated levels. Determining where problems exist within the agency is the first critical step to implementing effective solutions for building a system of high quality workers.***

The findings indicated that:

- A majority (76%) of the employees who exited occupied DCFS direct service positions, with most in Family Service Worker Trainee or Family Service Worker positions (58%).
- The exit reasons for the Family Service Worker Trainee and Family Service Worker classifications was "hired for another job", "better job/more money" rover caseworkers and (35%).
- Departing employees had occupied their positions for an average of 40 months before leaving DCFS, with Family Service Worker Trainees staying an average of 11 months and Family Service Workers an average of 30 months.
- The suggestion for improvement most frequently mentioned by exiting employees was "more pay" (20%), with a total of 27% citing a need for rover workers or lower caseloads.

***One of the recommendations in the Resignation Study was to suggest another method of getting feedback from staff who leaves the Division. The Planning Unit received a survey that Washington State sends staff when they leave their employment. The report along with the survey tool will be used to assist the Worker Recruitment and Retention Group. This group is being established to look at developing incentives for retaining family service workers***

Primary Responsibility: Office of Community Support and Office of Community Services  
Secondary Responsibility: Planning Unit

Task 3: Utilization of flexible scheduling.  
Accomplish Date: January 1, 2000

Primary Responsibility: Office of Community Services

***Task 4: Inclusion in competency based training program of stress and time management.  
Accomplish Date: Currently on going.***

***STATUS - These topics are covered in the current FSW pre-service curriculum. This curriculum is a part of the CORE training that is provided to all Family Service Workers prior to assumption of their caseload.***

Primary Responsibility: Office of Legislative Analysis Research and Planning, MidSOUTH  
Secondary Responsibility: Office of Community Services

## DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES

Requirement - For States, a description of the child protective, child welfare, family preservation, family support, time- limited family reunification services, adoption promotion and support services, and independent living services to be provided in the upcoming fiscal year highlighting any additions or changes in services or program design and including the information required in 45 CFR 1357.15(n). The State's CFSP must describe the publicly funded child and family services continuum: child welfare services (including child abuse and neglect prevention, intervention, and treatment services; and foster care); family preservation services; family support services; and services to support reunification, adoption, kinship care, independent living, or other permanent living arrangements.

Requirement - For States only, the information required to meet the maintenance of effort (non-supplantation) requirement in section 432(a)(7) of the Act and Federal regulation at 45 CFR 1357.32(f) (maintenance of effort);

DCFS continues to use its state and federal dollars to fund programs for clients who come to the attention of the Division. Clients enter the services system at any point based on their need for services. DCFS staff provides case planning, referral and case management services casework. The Division approves and supervises foster homes. An array of services are purchased from child welfare agencies, private psychiatric hospitals, community-based agencies, universities, other state divisions, licensed individuals, hospitals, etc. Services range from prevention to adoption or other permanent living situations.

Purchased Child Welfare Services include the following:

- Statewide comprehensive medical examinations for foster children through a contract with the University of Arkansas Medical School's Department of Pediatrics.
- Therapy, diagnosis and assessment services for adolescent sexual offenders through a contract with the University of Arkansas Medical School's Dept of Pediatrics (ASAP).
- Individual, family, marital and group therapy and various individual and group counseling services from private agencies, mental health associations, or private practitioners throughout the state.
- Parenting education and support classes.
- Childcare to enable individuals to participate in an alcohol drug treatment program.
- Professional language interpreters statewide when serving families that do not speak English.
- Support groups for children that are sexually abused.
- Supervised visitation.
- Deaf interpretation services statewide for families with hearing disabilities
- Treatment for adult perpetrators of child sexual abuse
- Services to disabled children.
- Emergency shelters for children, runaways and teens.
- Purchased services to children in the custody and care of DCFS include; therapeutic foster home programs, psychiatric residential treatment, comprehensive residential treatment, residential treatment, respite care, health services, independent living.

The Division uses Title IV-B, Part 2 monies for the following:

- Family Preservation (Protection and Support) - Intensive Family Services, Respite Care, Psychological Evaluations, Drug Screening, Paternity Testing, wraparound program.

- Family Support: Human Service Workers in the Schools, family resource centers, latchkey children's initiative, and alternative caregivers support groups, Intensive Family Services step-down programs, enrichment programs and tutoring services
- Adoption Support: Home studies, adoption home studies, recruitment and life books, foster parent visitation for finalized adoption, respite care, and adoptive parent training.
- Time Limited Family Re-Unification: Intensive Family Services, purchase of plane tickets for reuniting children with their families for visits and returning home, purchase of car seats for infants and children to meet new seat requirements for the state, substance abuse counseling, substance abuse treatment, psychological evaluation services, drug screening.

The Division does not use the Federal funds under title IV-B, subpart 2, to supplant Federal or non-Federal funds for existing family preservation and family support services.

## **REVISIONS TO THE TRAINING PLAN**

Requirement - Information on activities in the areas of training, technical assistance, research, evaluation, or management information systems that will be carried out in the upcoming fiscal year in support of the goals and objectives in the plan

## **Training Update - 2001 – 2002 Academic Partnership in Public Child Welfare**

A new contract with the University of Arkansas (U of A) will begin 7/1/01 that continues the partnership with DCFS and U of A. The partnership includes Arkansas State University (Jonesboro), Arkansas Tech University (Russellville), Harding University (Searcy), Philander Smith College (Little Rock), Southern Arkansas University (Magnolia), University of Arkansas at Monticello, and University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff. UAF will participate on the professional development team (PDT) with DCFS and University of Arkansas at Little Rock/ MidSOUTH Center as well as meet regularly with DCFS in order to oversee the work of the academic partnership.

The partner universities will provide the following educational activities:

- Field education units in DCFS county offices. Stipend students with a commitment to work for DCFS after graduation and other students in field placement will work with DCFS families under the supervision of university professional staff and DCFS supervisors.
- Field education (previously called mentoring) for new family service worker (FSW) trainees. University professional staff will teach competencies in the county offices to 100% of new FSW's as part of new staff on-the-job training modules.
- Casework practice education for FSW's. Skill improvement needs identified by individual training needs assessment (ITNA) will be taught in the field by university professional staff upon referral by supervisors.
- Educational Support Centers. State of the art child welfare resources will be purchased and maintained on-line for checkout by DCFS staff, child welfare faculty, and students.
- Continuing Education. DCFS staff, university faculty, and students preparing for employment with DCFS will be able to attend out of state conferences and seminars in child welfare. Continuing education based on information from these conferences and seminars will be provided to DCFS staff and university faculty. Partner university staff will meet regularly with DCFS area managers and MidSOUTH training staff to plan the delivery of training for DCFS staff. University of Arkansas will maintain the training calendar and curricula developed by the partners on the Partnership web site.
- Curriculum development. University interdisciplinary committees focus on updating and infusing child welfare course content for social work and other degree programs.

### 2001 – 2002 Partnership for Public Child Welfare

A new contract with the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR), including the Department of Social Work and MidSOUTH Center for Leadership and Training, will begin 7/1/01. A Professional Development Team (PDT) comprised of representatives from DCFS and MidSOUTH and the academic partnership will oversee all aspects of training under this contract.

MidSOUTH will deliver, through its training staff at its five training centers and contracted trainers at off site locations, all DCFS new staff training. Training will be provided to family service workers (FSW), social service aides (SSA), and FSW supervisors, as well as to foster/adoptive parents and Arkansas State Police child abuse hotline operators and investigators. MidSOUTH will also provide continuing education for DCFS staff and foster parents to help meet the number of hours of training mandated on an annual basis.

Children's Reporting and Information System (CHRIS) training will be provided during FSW new staff training, for DCFS releases of new technology, and in county offices and MidSOUTH computer labs to address specific user problems.

The following training support activities necessary to provide training or manage the system are part of this contract:

- Curricula development and revision for all new staff training and continuing education offerings and production of trainer/trainee manuals.
- Individual Training Needs Assessment (ITNA) for FSWs, supervisors, and foster parents will inform the system of continuing education by identifying competencies for which training is needed. Data from ITNAs will be compiled for counties, DCFS areas, and statewide.
- Management of a training database that will track training provided and staff trained.
- Statewide coordination and management of technology training and distance education.
- Maintenance of a child welfare resource center and checkout services for DCFS staff, students, and faculty.
- Evaluation of training.

The Department of Social Work/MidSOUTH will provide all the educational services available through the Academic Partnership as well as an MSW degree program for DCFS staff on approved educational leave.

### **Independent Living**

Training will be provided to help foster parents, adoptive parents, workers in group homes, and case managers understand and address the issues confronting adolescents preparing for independent living, and must, to the extent possible, coordinate such training with the independent living program conducted for adolescents. It is incorporated into the FSW new staff training and the Foster/Adopt PRIDE curricula.

Total budget for the contract with University of Arkansas at Little Rock  
\$4,774,131

Total budget for the contract with the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville  
\$2,816,397

## **RECRUITMENT EFFORTS**

Requirement - A description of the States' and Indian Tribes' progress and accomplishments made with regard to the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflects the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the state for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed. (See section 422(b)(9) of the Act);

## ADOPTION RECRUITMENT ACTIVITIES

### I. Media Recruitment Activities (General and Targeted)

- At least two major television general recruitment campaigns with KTHV, Channel 11 (Little Rock), viewing area---each extending over a six month period for each campaign.
- One major statewide radio campaign---65 radio stations.
- BET television interviews---ran periodically for several months.
- Three radio interviews on KOKY (Little Rock) as part of a targeted campaign to recruit African American families.
- Ad campaign on KOKY as part of a targeted campaign to recruit African American families.
- Information booths at summer events sponsored by KOKY as part of a targeted campaign to recruit African American families.
- Ads in the Arkansas Democrat Gazette periodically for several months.
- Newspaper articles on adoption---arranged by Adoption Specialists.
- Media coverage of the adoption picnics/parties/events.
- Television and radio interviews with Adoption Specialists.
- Cable access---Northwest and Southwest Arkansas.
- Special nationwide television programs---for example, CBS Home for the Holidays

### II. Community Awareness and Education (General and Targeted)

- Presentations by Adoption Specialists and Central Office adoption staff to organizations, clubs, churches, business leaders, schools, etc.
- Information booths arranged by Adoption Specialists and Central Office adoption staff at festivals, special events, fairs, churches, libraries, conferences, adoption fairs, etc.
- Adoption web sites.
- National adoption posters.
- National Adoption Center and other adoption exchanges.
- Experienced adoptive and foster families.
- Adoption picnics/parties/events.
- Other adoption agencies
- Adoptive parent support groups.

### III. Child Specific Recruitment

- DHS/DCFS adoption web site
- DHS/DCFS photo-listing
- KTHV, Channel 11 (Little Rock), television ads with Mrs. Huckabee featuring waiting children.
- Feature of waiting child in Northwest Arkansas regional newspaper.
- Flyers developed by Adoption Specialists on waiting children.
- Adoption picnics/parties/events.
- Information booths featuring the photo listing at festivals, special events, fairs, churches, adoption fairs, conferences, etc.---arranged by Adoption Specialists and Central Office adoption staff.
- Adoption Specialists contacts with waiting and experienced adoptive families.
- Adoption exchanges (limited use).

**CROSS-JURISDICTIONAL RESOURCES TO FACILITATE TIMELY  
ADOPTIVE OR PERMANENT PLACEMENTS**

Requirement - A description of the States' and Indian Tribes' plans for the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children. (See section 422(b)(12) of the Act). This applies to States and Indian Tribes applying for title IV-B, subpart 1, funds;

The number of finalized adoptions is increasing. During the federal fiscal year in 1998, 251 adoptions were finalized. The number for the 1999 federal fiscal year is approximately 278. The Division is waiting for the official total on finalized adoptions for FFY 2000. 305 children were placed with adoptive families in SFY 1999, and 352 children were placed with adoptive families in SFY 2000. The process is underway to also register information about waiting children on the National Adoption Exchange (Faces of Adoption). The Division accepts approved adoption home studies on prospective adoptive families from other states if the families are interested in adopting a child who is considered to be special needs in relation to adoption planning. A family from another state was recently selected for a waiting teenager who is featured on the DHS/DCFS adoption web site. Pre-placement visits were initiated. However, the family decided after several visits not to continue towards placement. A family from another state is presently being considered for another teenager as a result of the registration on the web site. A sibling group of two is in the process of being placed with a relative in another country (Brazil).

**THE INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION ACT (ICAA) OF 2000  
(P.L. 106-279)**

Requirement - contain a description of the activities that the State has undertaken for children adopted from other countries, including the provision of adoption and post-adoption services; and

Requirement - provide that the State shall collect and report information on children who are adopted from other countries and who enter into State custody as a result of the disruption of a placement for adoption or the dissolution of an adoption, including the number of children, the agencies who handled the placement or the adoption, the plans for the child, and the reasons for the disruption or dissolution.”

The Division has policy and procedures describing expectations for inter-country adoptions. There have not been any adoptions or adoption disruptions based on an inter-country adoption for this state.

**The POLICY (VIII-J): INTER-COUNTRY ADOPTIONS** The Adoption Services Unit shall provide assistance with Inter-Country Adoptions.

**The PROCEDURE (VIII-J1): Inter-Country Adoptions** The **Manager, Adoption Services Unit** will:

- Receive inquiries/referrals about inter-country adoptions.
- Provide packets to inquirers about inter-country adoption which will include "Adopting a Foreign Child: Handbook for Persons Thinking about Inter-Country Adoption" (PUB-006) and list of licensed private adoption agencies and licensed social workers who will complete adoption assessments for inter-country adoptions.
- Determine if an adoption assessment prepared by a licensed social worker or others designated by the court (licensed adoption agencies are exempt from this review) meet child placement licensing requirements for adoption in Arkansas.
- Provide approval letter to the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service to verify compliance to licensing requirements.
- Maintain permanent adoption files.
- Train staff with licensed private adoption agencies, licensed social workers, and others designated by the court involved with inter-country adoption.

The **Adoption Specialist** will:

- Refer inter-country adoption inquiries/referrals to the Manager, Adoption Services Unit or provide an inquiry packet as described.

## **ADOPTION RECRUITMENT PLAN FFYS 2000-2004**

In May 2001, Arkansas had a pool of 169 approved adoptive families waiting for children. Of that 169, 38 or 22% were African-American. Although the number of families has increased, the percentage of African-American families has decreased slightly from the 24% quoted in the FY 98/99-recruitment plan.

Arkansas had 469 children waiting to be adopted at the end of the second quarter of SFY 2001. 115 or 23% of these children are living in preadoptive homes. 381 children with parental rights terminated were not placed in adoptive homes. 44% of the children available for adoption were African-American. 54% were Caucasian children.

Given the characteristics of children described above and the families available for placement, the Division of Children and Family Services will use the strategies outlined in this plan to locate and develop adoptive home resources to meet the needs of waiting children.

Goal I: To improve DCFS' general adoption recruitment and retention efforts

Objective 1: To increase awareness and education of all DCFS / DCO clerical staff concerning adoption.

Task 1: Feature a waiting child or sibling group in the DHS quarterly newsletter.

**Accomplish Date: January 1, 2002**

Lead Responsibility: Adoption Services Unit

Secondary Responsibility: DHS Communications Director

Task 2: Develop statewide curriculum and provide training for DCFS/DCO clerical staff on the adoption inquiry process. **Accomplish Date: June 30, 2002**

Lead Responsibility: Area Managers and Adoptions Services Unit

Secondary Responsibility: Adoption Supervisors and County Administrators

Task 3: Conduct ongoing continuing education training on adoption for Family Service Workers, Foster and Adoptive Parents, Adoption Specialists, Mental Health Workers, and Community Providers. This will include training that addresses work with diverse cultures, linguistics, racial, and economic communities. **Accomplish Date: July 1, 2002**

Lead Responsibility: MidSOUTH Training Academy, Adoption Services Unit

**Objective 2: To ensure that adoption practices are consistent statewide**

Task 1: Develop an information packet to distribute to prospective adoptive families.

**Accomplish Date: June 30, 2002**

Lead Responsibility: Adoption Services Unit

Secondary Responsibility: Adoption Supervisors and Policy Unit

Task 2: Develop an initial inquiry form to be used in county offices to refer prospective adoptive families to Adoption Specialists. **Accomplish Date: June 30, 2002**

Lead Responsibility: Adoption Services Unit  
Secondary Responsibility: Policy Unit

Task 3: Establish quarterly adoption staff meetings. **Accomplish Date: June 30, 2002**

Lead Responsibility: Adoption Services Unit

Task 4: Require consistent job practices for all Adoption Specialists. **Accomplish Date: June 30, 2002**

Lead Responsibility: DCFS Executive Staff  
Secondary Responsibility: Adoption Supervisors and Area Managers

Task 5: Develop CHRIS statistical reports to ensure effective adoption management. **Accomplish Date: December 30, 2002**

Lead Responsibility: CHRIS Unit  
Secondary Responsibility: Adoption Services Unit

Objective 3: To promote awareness and education among community organizations

Task 1: Develop a statewide plan for awareness and education on adoption. **Accomplish Date: June 1, 2003**

Lead Responsibility: Adoption Services Unit  
Secondary Responsibility: Adoption Supervisors and DHS Communications Director

Task 2: Develop area plans for awareness and education on adoption. **Accomplish Date: October 1, 2002**

Lead Responsibility: Area Adoption Staff  
Secondary Responsibility: Adoptions Service Unit and Adoption Supervisors

Task 3: Utilize support groups, speakers' bureaus, and faith-based groups. **Accomplish Date: June 1, 2003**

Lead Responsibility: Area Adoption Staff

**Objective 4: To explore post-adoption services**

Task 1: Mail letters regarding the availability of post-adoption services to subsidized adoptive families and foster families. **Accomplish Date: January 1, 2002**

Lead Responsibility: Adoption Services Unit

Task 2: Use results of post-adoption services survey findings to develop and expand post adoption services. **Accomplish Date: June 30, 2003**

Lead Responsibility: Adoption Services Unit

Task 3: Develop a brochure on available post-adoption services. **Accomplish Date: June 30, 2003**

Lead Responsibility: Adoption Services Unit

Objective 5: To monitor the progress of the Adoption Recruitment Plan on a quarterly basis

Task 1: Develop a monitoring tool  
**Accomplish Date: February 28, 2002**

Lead Responsibility: Adoption Services Unit  
Secondary Responsibility: Policy Unit

Task 2: Train adoption staff on how to use the monitoring tool. **Accomplish Date: June 30 2002**

Lead Responsibility: Adoption Services Unit and Policy Unit

Goal II: To provide targeted recruitment efforts to find homes for waiting children

Objective 1: Each Adoption Specialist will recruit and retain a minimum of ten (10) African American families per year for the next three (3) years (Exception: If the geographical area of one adoption specialist has less than 5% African American population their minimum number may be adjusted accordingly, but the statewide total will supplement the reduced number).

Task 1: Include in Area Recruitment Plan, the plan for recruiting and retaining African American homes to address this objective. **Accomplish Dates:**  
**June 30, 2002-10 Families**  
**June 30, 2003-10 Families**  
**June 30, 2004-10 Families**

Lead Responsibility: Adoption Specialist  
Secondary Responsibility: Adoption Supervisor

Task 2: Coordinate and develop media presentations, written materials, and information packets (to include information related to home study process and agency access) to recruit African American families. **Accomplish Date: June 1, 2002 and on-going**

Lead Responsibility: Adoption Supervisor  
Secondary Responsibility: Adoption Specialist

Task 3: Establish working relationships with a minimum of ten- (10) local community based groups each year. **Accomplish Date: June 1, 2002**

Lead Responsibility: Adoption Specialist  
Secondary Responsibility: Adoption Supervisor

Task 4: Develop and maintain at least one adoption support group in each Area.

**Accomplish Date: January 1, 2002.**

Lead Responsibility: Adoption Specialist

Secondary Responsibility: Adoption Supervisor

Objective 2: Recruit and retain adoptive families for teens, children with severe emotional conditions, and sibling groups of 3 or more.

Task 1: Develop a brochure on teen adoptions. **Accomplish Date: December 1, 2002**

Lead Responsibility: Adoptions Services Unit

Task 2: Coordinate and develop media presentations, written materials, and information packets (to include information related to the home study process and agency access) to recruit adoptive families for teens, children with several emotional problems, and sibling groups of three (3) or more.

**Accomplish Date: June 1, 2002 and on-going**

Lead Responsibility: Adoptions Supervisor

Secondary Responsibility: Adoption Specialist

Task 3: Establish working relationships with a minimum of ten- (10) local community based groups, for teen recruitment each year. **Accomplish Date: First 10 by June 1, 2002**

Lead Responsibility: Adoption Specialist

Secondary Responsibility: Adoption Supervisor

Task 4: Identify and address barriers to therapeutic foster families becoming adoptive parents.

**Accomplish Date: December 1, 2002**

Lead Responsibility: Adoptions Services Unit

Secondary Responsibility: Foster Care and Behavioral Treatment Units

Task 5: Establish and increase resources for post adoption support by exploring possibilities under the Medicaid State Plan and other funding sources. **Accomplish Date: June 1, 2003**

Lead Responsibility: Office of Administrative Services

Secondary Responsibility: Adoption Supervisors, Adoption Services Unit

Task 6: Establish a buddy system for adoptive families by utilizing support groups and other approved families. **Accomplish Date: June 1, 2002**

Lead Responsibility: Adoption Specialist

Secondary Responsibility: Adoption Services Unit

***Goal III: To identify and recruit appropriate adoptive families for specific waiting children***

**Objective 1: Complete a web site and photo-listing registration on all waiting children with special needs.**

Task 1: Identify children with special needs who are legally free for adoption, are not placed with an adoptive family, and are not registered on the DCFS web site and photo-listing.

**Accomplish Date: June 1, 2002 and on-going**

Lead Responsibility: Adoption Specialists and Adoption Supervisors

Secondary Responsibility: Adoption Services Unit

Task 2: Prepare web site and photo-listing registration packets on the waiting children with the assistance of volunteers. **Accomplish Date: September 1, 2002 and on-going**

Lead Responsibility: Adoption Specialists and Volunteers

Secondary Responsibility: Adoption Supervisors and Adoption Services Unit

Task 3: Enter the registration of the waiting children onto the web site and photo listing

**Accomplish Date: December 1, 2002 and on-going**

Lead Responsibility: Adoption Services Unit

**Objective 2: Identify and address barriers to interstate and intrastate placements of children with special needs.**

Task 1: Develop a network with private and public agencies to increase the resource of approved adoptive applicants for waiting children with special needs. **Accomplish Date: June 1, 2003**

Lead Responsibility: Adoption Specialists, Adoption Supervisors, and Adoption Services Unit

Secondary Responsibility: Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children Unit

Task 2: Develop recommendations for non-discriminatory finders' fees for the adoption of specific waiting children with special needs. **Accomplish Date: June 1, 2002**

Lead Responsibility: Adoption Services Unit

Secondary Responsibility: Policy Unit

Objective 3: Implement a child specific recruitment plan.

Task 1: Develop the child specific recruitment plan form. **Accomplish Date: February 28, 2002**

Lead Responsibility: Adoption Services Unit

Secondary Responsibility: Policy Unit

Task 2: Train the Adoption Specialists and Adoption Supervisors on utilization of the child specific recruitment plan. **Accomplish Date: June 1, 2002**

Lead Responsibility: Adoption Services Unit

Secondary Responsibility: Policy Unit

Task 3: Complete a child specific recruitment plan form on every waiting child.

**Accomplish Date: January 1, 2003**

Lead Responsibility: Adoption Specialist and Adoption Supervisors

Secondary Responsibility: Adoption Services Unit

Objective 4: Identify and utilize available community resources to find families for specific waiting children with special needs.

Task 1: Identify during concurrent planning families who have significant ties to a waiting child and determine if it is appropriate to consider the families.

**Accomplish Date: January 1, 2002 and on-going**

Lead Responsibility: Adoption Specialists, Family Service Workers, Adoption Supervisors

Secondary Responsibility: Adoption Services Unit and MidSOUTH Training Academy

Task 2: Plan and implement at least five activities during the federal fiscal year to recruit adoptive families for specific waiting children.

**Accomplish Date: October 1, 2002 and on-going**

Lead Responsibility: Adoption Specialists and Adoption Supervisors

Secondary Responsibility: Adoption Services Unit

## **COMPLIANCE WITH THE INDIAN CHILD WELFARE ACT**

Requirement - An update on the "... specific measures taken by the State to comply with the Indian Child Welfare Act" [See section 422(b)(11) of the Act];

Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA): Arkansas has no recognized tribes within the state. DCFS complies with ICWA on a case-by-case basis. When a child who is identified as a member of a tribe comes to the attention of the Division, the child is referred to the DHS Office of Chief Council (OCC). OCC contacts tribal officials to determine whether or not the tribe will take jurisdiction of the case.

Procedures are reflected in the DCFS Policy and Procedures Manual. Policy states before placing a child into foster care, the worker should “Contact the OCC Attorney immediately if there is any indication that the child is a member of an Indian tribe.” For Birth Parents Relinquishing Infants for Adoption, policy states “Comply with the Indian Child Welfare Act if there is Indian ancestry in either parent’s family.” In assessing and preparing a child for adoption policy states “Assure compliance to Indian Child Welfare Act, if applicable.” For selection of an adoptive family policy states “ Assure compliance with Indian Child Welfare Act if applicable.” In the past year, the division placed five Native Americans in foster care.

## **ADOPTION INCENTIVE PAYMENT**

Requirement - For those States receiving an adoption incentive payment, specify the services that have been, or will be, provided to children and families with the adoption incentive funds.

## ADOPTION INCENTIVE ACTIVITIES

Response: The adoption incentive monies have been used to purchase the following:

- Color printers for each Adoption Specialist for the development of information to recruit adoptive families.
- Color printer for the Central Office Adoption Services Unit to develop the registration pages in the statewide photo-listing album of waiting children, other information to recruit adoptive families and a statewide newsletter for adoptive applicants and families.
- Materials for adoption awareness and activities to recruit adoptive families for Areas III, IV, VI, VII, IX and X.
- Newspaper classified ad about an adoption orientation meeting in Area VI.
- Polaroid cameras (4) for Area II to assist in recruiting adoptive families for waiting children.
- Fees for a speaker at the annual foster parent/adoptive parent training conference.
- Registration fee and related expenses for up to 100 adoptive families to attend the annual foster parent/adoptive parent training conference.
- Adoption home studies on families and adoption summaries on children by contract provider.

In addition, the following will be purchased using adoption incentive monies:

- Books, video tapes, and other materials to create and/or expand a resource library for each Adoption Specialist and Central Office Adoption Services Unit (for the purpose of making these resources available to adoptive applicants, adoptive families, professionals, etc.)
- Training for adoptive families.
- Activities and materials to recruit adoptive families.

**SPECIFIC MEASURES TAKEN TO IMPLEMENT  
TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS  
CHANGES BASED ON ASFA**

Requirement - Please provide information on the specific measures taken to implement the transition rules that apply to section 475(5)(E) of the Act, and the outcomes of the implementation. See ACYF-CB-PI-98-14, August 20, 1998 regarding "new" and "current" children in foster care;

And, an update on the capacity of the State child welfare agency and the State judicial system to implement and meet the requirement to file a petition to terminate the parental rights of the child's parents, if the exclusions do not apply, when a child has been in foster care for 15 of the most recent 22 months.

The Division has completed a number of activities to assure that this has been accomplished. The following has been completed.

- 1) Updating the state Juvenile Code regarding termination of parental rights has been revised to reflect ASFA.
- 2) Agency policy and procedures have been revised to reflect the termination of parental rights as outlined in ASFA and the Arkansas Juvenile Code.
- 3) Training on the ASFA regulations was provided to all staff in the Division.
- 4) The agency's SACWIS system was enhanced to incorporate ASFA regulations.
- 5) The Division has created a monthly report entitled the "Permanency Planning Detail Report" that details children in care, length of time in care, last court date and other identifying information. This report is provided to the Department's Office of Chief Counsel as well as staff in the Division.
- 6) The Division contracts with a consultant firm for the purpose of determining the progress in implementing the various provisions of ASFA. This firm produces annual reports, entitled *Compliance with the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997*, describing the Division progress towards ASFA. There have been four reports published.
- 7) Goal 3, objective 5, tasks 1 - 4 include activities specific to ASFA, are described in the Annual Progress and Services Report.

## **KINSHIP CARE UPDATE**

Kinship Care Update - A committee has been formed to identify the necessary impact of the Final Rules and Regulations. A memo was sent to DCFS staff explaining that the new federal rule stated kinship homes must meet the same standards as regular foster homes. Staff identified all kinship homes and determined the standards they need to meet. Letters were sent to those kinship homes explaining the new requirements. Staff scheduled foster/adopt pride training for those homes. Kinship homes were trained and brought into compliance. Policy and procedures are currently being revised to reflect these changes.

## **CAPTA ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

Requirement\_ - Accomplishments to date under the CAPTA portion of the consolidated CFSP.

Objective I: The continuance of parenting education/support groups.

The Division funded contracts for parenting support groups in sixty-two counties. Group members must be referred by DCFS or a court order issued by a Juvenile Division of Chancery Court Judge.

Participants who attend groups are provided information regarding behavior management, child development, anger control, and self-esteem through a combination of curriculum and group exercises. All participants are given a pre-test and post-test to measure mastery. Group members are encouraged to discuss their experiences and problems and are provided feedback from the facilitator and other members. The facilitator often assigns “homework” for participants, which provides them an opportunity to practice newly acquired skills on their children. The facilitators also offer encouragement, advice, and experiences to the group members.

Parenting education/support is court ordered for many clients as a condition of allowing children to return home or preventing foster care placement. In some instances, these court-ordered participants are often resentful and hostile. It seems beneficial for these participants to have a provider who is not affiliated with the Division and is viewed as “neutral.” The only services provided in several areas of the state, particularly rural counties, are the services offered through Grant monies.

Group participants are encouraged to think of their participation not only as educational but also as a positive social experience. The members’ view the group as a supportive and safe environment that provides them an opportunity to interact with other members experiencing the same problems builds networks, share triumphs and stories. Babysitting services are available and refreshments are often served.

These parenting education support groups are considered successful based upon feedback from the providers and county staff, as well as feedback from the participants. Upon completion of the group, participants demonstrate an enhanced knowledge of child development, and are able to demonstrate more appropriate parenting skills. The provision of parenting education/support remains a cornerstone in our prevention and reunification efforts.

The “Parenting From Prison” program continues to be partially funded with Grant monies and now includes males. This exciting program focuses on the special needs of incarcerated parents. These groups are held at the prison on a weekly basis and rely heavily upon the services of volunteers. Funds are used to purchase materials, defray transportation costs, and pay for some professional facilitation. The participants enjoy the interaction with the facilitators and seem to look forward to these weekly meetings. Most of the volunteers have been involved in this program for several years and are truly committed to helping them become better parents. “Parents From Prison” has been recognized by the community as a valuable resource in equipping released inmates for a successful transition to non-institutional life.

Objective II: The continuation of support groups to non-offending parents, guardians, or caretakers of sexually abused children.

Grant monies are utilized to support three contracts for Non-Offending Caretaker Groups in four (4) counties. The Division of Children and Family Services makes referrals to these groups. Most members attend voluntarily, although some are court ordered to participate.

These support groups are extremely beneficial in assisting the non-offending caretaker in dealing with the effects of sexual abuse disclosure within the family. Cases often involve intra familial sexual abuse. Many non-offending caretakers are survivors of childhood sexual abuse and have never confronted their own abuse. The caretakers must learn to cope with issues of betrayal, anger, guilt, and loss. The Division believes that an empowered, supported caretaker is better equipped to support the victim child in a positive manner.

Objective III: The continuation of group therapy for adult offenders of child sexual abuse.

The Division funds services to one contract provider who offers group therapy for adults male offenders of sexual abuse in nine (9) counties. Participants are referred by DCFS, law enforcement, or Arkansas Department of Corrections to group therapy as a probationary regulation upon release.

The Offender Groups are a long-term intensive process in which the facilitator spends a great deal of time establishing rapport and trust with the offenders. This process may take several months before the facilitator can assist the offender in breaking through the denial phase. The groups meet weekly and may continue as long as eighteen months to two years. Emphasis is placed on acceptance of the responsibility for the abuse, recognition of predisposing factors towards re-offense, social skill building, stress reduction, and impulse control. Participants may acknowledge the abuse to family members or write a letter of apology to the victim.

The success for these groups is well known throughout the communities of social work, law enforcement and the judiciary. The facilitators work closely with parole and probation officers and immediately report treatment lapses. Treatment would not be available to most of these offenders without the support of Grant funds. Members who have been successful offer support and hope to new participants. Additional providers are still being sought for wider coverage.

Objective IV: The continuation of Juvenile Sex Offender Groups

We have one provider who conducts adolescent sex offender groups. This group has kept a consistent attendance record and appears to have an excellent rapport with the facilitator. We are encouraging neighboring counties to refer appropriate clients to this program. Recruitment of additional providers is planned.

Objective V: The continuation of support groups for child victims of sexual abuse.

Grant funds currently purchase contract services for Victim Support Groups through four (4) providers in (4) areas. Participation is open to referrals from DCFS or local prosecuting attorneys. Support groups generally are six to eight weeks in duration, however, some victim children choose to attend group throughout the year. These groups assist victim children in dealing with the stigma associated with child sexual abuse, coping with depression and anger, and feelings of shame and guilt.

Through group participation participants learn to deal with their victimization and to break the cycle of inter-generational abuse by teaching them how to avoid making choices that will negatively impact their own children. These groups provide treatment in an effective and cost efficient manner to many victim children in Arkansas.

Objective VI: Purchase of professional consultation pursuant to reports of suspected medical neglect to disabled infants.

The Division maintains an agreement with the Arkansas Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics for the availability of a physician to assist DCFS in responding to “Baby Doe” reports. The Division’s policy outlines the procedures for workers to follow if a report is received.

These procedures include contacting the State Liaison Officer and invoking the agreement. By assuring that a licensed, non-affiliated physician is available at all times to assist DCFS staff in assessing these reports, the Division is confident that it is able to respond appropriately and is in compliance with CAPTA regulations.

Objective VII: Purchase of consulting services to develop, implements, and monitor Citizen Review Panels.

A 1996 amendment to CAPTA required states to develop and establish Citizen Review Panels in order to receive funding. The Citizen Review Panels are designed to evaluate the Child Protective Service System. Arkansas has four (4) Citizen Review Panels with representation from the geographic and demographic composition of the state. The four counties in the areas were selected because the communities had demonstrated a willingness to work collaboratively to improve systems for abused and neglected children.

Objective VIII: Interpreter Services-Arkansas Interpreter Services provides interpreter services to county office staff with families who are not proficient in English. This service also aids our workers in reading necessary documents. The interpreter service continues to be very popular.

Objective VIII: The Kinship caregivers pilot program was implemented in Pulaski County. Centers for Youth and Families facilitate the program. Twenty-one kinship families are receiving weekly support. Services provided focus on custody and family law, parenting education, reunification techniques, and referrals for services.

Progress of areas selected for improvement:

2. Area 7-developing, strengthening, and support child abuse neglect and prevention, treatment, and research programs in the public and private sectors.
  - A. Partial funding for the Arkansas King Commission against youth violence. Paid registration for independent living foster teens to attend. This experience enabled them to receive information and training in mediation, problem resolution, and self esteem.
  - B. The Alternative Caregivers (Kinship Care) program was piloted in Pulaski County. This program provides supportive services to relatives by offering information on custody and family law, parenting education, reunification techniques, and referrals to services. Childcare is available when groups meet.
3. Area 8-Programs to assist in obtaining or coordinating necessary services for families of disabled infants with life threatening conditions, including services necessary to facilitate adoptive placement of any such infants who have been relinquished for adoption.

- A. The Division maintains an agreement with the Arkansas Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics for the availability of a physician to assist DCFS in responding to reports of abuse to disabled infants. The Division has written policy covering the steps to take when this type referral comes in.

2000 Accomplishments Include:

- A. Parenting education/support groups have been funded in sixty-two (62) counties. Parents who attended these sessions received training on child development, behavior management, anger control, and self-esteem using a mixture of didactic, discussion, and experiential methods. Participants are given a pre-test and post-test to measure mastery.

Parenting education/support is court ordered for many clients as a condition of allowing children to return home or as a prevention to foster care placement. Group participants are encouraged to think of their participation not only as educational, but also as a positive social experience. Members' view the group as a supportive and safe environment, which provides them an opportunity to interact with other members experiencing the same problems, builds networks, share triumphs and stores. Babysitting services are available and refreshments are often served.

These parenting education/support groups are considered highly successful based upon feedback from the providers, county staff, and post-test results of participants. Participants demonstrate more appropriate parenting skills and an enhanced knowledge of child/adolescent behavior. This service has been a major component of our prevention and reunification efforts.

We have also enjoyed significant success with our "parenting from prison" program. These groups are held at the prison on a weekly basis. Funds are used to purchase materials, defray transportation costs, and provide some professional facilitation. This program is recognized in the community in assisting released inmates to reunite and effectively parent their children.

- B. We have non-offending caretaker support groups in four (4) counties. These groups have been instrumental in assisting participants dealing with the effects of sexual abuse disclosure within the family. Many of the caretakers are survivors of childhood sexual abuse and are taught to cope with issues of betrayal, anger, guilt, and loss. Empowering the caretaker allows them to support the victim child.
- C. Adult and adolescent sexual abuse offender groups are held in nine (9) counties. DCFS, law enforcement, and the Department of Corrections make referrals.

This type of group therapy is a long-term, intensive process and usually takes a long period for the therapist to establish rapport and trust with the offenders. The groups meet weekly and may continue up to twenty-four months. Emphasis is placed on acceptance of the responsibility for the abuse, recognition of predisposing factors toward re-offense, social skill building, stress reduction, and impulse control.

Acknowledgement of the success of this program has come from the social work, law enforcement, and the judiciary community. Facilitators immediately report treatment lapses.

- D. We have four areas that have providers facilitating groups supporting child victims of sexual abuse. These groups assist victim children in dealing with child sexual abuse and the associated stigma, coping with anger and depression, and feelings of shame and guilt.

Participants are encouraged to deal with their victimization and to break the cycle of inter-generational abuse by teaching them how to avoid making choices that negatively impact their own children.

This program has provided treatment to many victim children in an effective and cost-efficient manner.

- E. Purchase of professional consultation pursuant to reports of suspected medical neglect to disabled infants: The Division of Children and Family Services maintains an agreement with the Arkansas Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics for the availability of a physician to assist DCFS in responding to “Baby Doe” reports. The Division has policy covering the procedures for workers to follow. Due to having a licensed non-affiliated physician available to assist DCFS staff in assessment, we are assured of appropriate response.
- F. Purchase of consulting services to develop, implement, and monitor Citizen Review Panels: Arkansas has four (4) citizen review panels representative of the geographic and demographic composition of the state. These panels are designed to evaluate the child protective service system and are willing to work collaboratively to improve systems for abused and neglected children.
- G. Interpreter Services: Due to a pressing need around the state to have ready access to language interpreters/translators, we contracted to provide twenty-four hour, seven days a week, on-call interpreter service. These interpreters assist workers in conducting assessments or providing service to families who do not speak English.
- H. Alternative Caregiver Support Group: This is a new program being piloted in Pulaski County. Its purpose is to support the needs of kinship caregivers and focus on assistance in keeping children out of regular foster care.

The contractor offers prevention and intervention services to include, but not limited to, provision of information on custody and family law, parenting education including discipline, support groups, information on reunification with the birth parent, and information on drug abuse, violence, pregnancy prevention, and resources. The contractor makes counseling referrals when appropriate and reports progress to worker.

- I. Child Abuse Prevention Awareness: We have purchased materials and educational supplies supportive of Child Abuse Prevention Awareness Month and for our staff’s skill/knowledge building. We’ve sent staff to training and conferences and promoted adoption opportunities for special needs children and adolescent/teen prevention seminars by paying honoraria and registration fees.

The aforementioned services funded by CAPTA significantly reduced child abuse and neglect and entry into foster care. Approximately seven percent (7%) of children receiving services experienced a true report of maltreatment within one year of initiation of services and only eight percent (8%) of children receiving services entered foster care within the year. Overall, Arkansas Division of Children and Family Services family preservation components are effectively building strong and stable families.

**FOR CAPTA  
PROGRAM AREAS SELECTED FOR IMPROVEMENT**

Requirement - An update on the program areas selected for improvement from the nine areas in section 106(a) (1) through (9) of CAPTA;

## Progress of Selected Areas

A. Developing, strengthening, and supporting child abuse and neglect prevention, treatment, and research programs in the public and private sectors.

We continue to recruit providers and train staff in service delivery toward our goal of statewide coverage.

We have been able to provide services supporting the reduction of child abuse and neglect statewide. Our providers are all qualified (education, licensure, certification, continuing education) to deliver services and all program managers are trained in evaluation.

We continue to work on our data tracking system to more effectively pinpoint areas needing corrective action. We are implementing a new system to allow program and area managers the capability of monitoring to determine if appropriate referrals are being made.

We are still experiencing difficulty in developing contracts in certain parts of the State. We continue working with neighborhood coalitions and are seeking their assistance in identifying qualified providers.

B. Programs to assist in obtaining or coordinating necessary services for families of disabled infants with life threatening conditions.

We continue to maintain a purchase order with the Arkansas Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics to respond to reports of suspected medical neglect of a disabled infant and provide consultation in the form of review of the chart, or, if necessary, a physical examination of the child. Fortunately, we have had no referrals to this service.

In addition, we continue to support the adoption of disabled infants through community outreach programs, adoption conferences, speakers covering the topic of special needs children, and the purchase of resource and recruitment materials. Arkansas exceeded the baseline for finalized Adoption of special needs children in federal fiscal year 1998 and 1999.

**CAPTA STATE GRANT FUNDS AND ANY CHANGES IN  
ACTIVITIES FOR FY 2001 FUND**

Requirement - An update of activities that the State intends to carry out with its CAPTA State Grant funds and any changes in activities for FY 2001 funds.

Arkansas plans to:

- Continue complying with identified CAPTA program areas 7 and 8 as they are very compatible with our goals and objectives related to family preservation.
- Adding CAPTA Area 5, developing, strengthening, and facilitating training opportunities and requirements for individuals overseeing and providing services to children and their families through the child protection system.
- For CAPTA Area 9, developing and enhancing the capacity of community-based programs to integrate shared leadership strategies between parents and professionals to prevent and treat child abuse and neglect at the neighborhood level. Because families' function best in healthy communities, the Division will continue to develop new partners, build upon existing partnerships, and apply primary prevention components when appropriate.
- To target the Arkansas Delta and the Southern region for determine their needs in service delivery. These areas are economically depressed with high rates of poverty. Meetings will be scheduled with local representation from the schools, judiciary, neighborhoods, health, and spirit communities in an attempt to identify providers.

## **THE SERVICES AND TRAINING PROVIDED UNDER THE CAPTA**

Requirement - A description of the services and training provided under the CAPTA State Grant as required by section 106(b)(2)(C) of CAPTA;

All programs have been rewritten to contain more specificity covering outcomes. Evaluation tools have been revised and the parenting program has a pre- and post-test. Training will begin 07/01/2000 on the services referral system that will be a part of CHRIS. Program Managers are covering the ten areas training county staff on appropriate referrals and case documentation. This support will continue.

## **THE INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM**

Requirement - A description on how the Independent Living Program was coordinated with other child welfare services during FY 2000.

## IV-B UPDATE FOR FY2001

An Independent Living Youth Advisory Board was formed, and this new board held its first meeting on October 1, 2000. Representatives from each of the ten service areas are included in statewide meetings with Area IL Coordinators and administrative personnel to discuss program goals, plans, policy, problems, etc.

The Title IV-E Independent Living Program continued to operate in unison with the Foster Care Program during FY2001 to improve information dissemination about the Independent Living Grant Program in the ten Children and Family Services areas in Arkansas. This was done to assist in the recruitment and training of foster parents, the recruitment of teens into the program and to provide the public with knowledge of what the program can do for foster teens. Information was shared with private facilities that house foster teen in an effort to further develop a working partnership so that a broader spectrum of basic life-skills training could be provided to teens prior to their reaching the age of emancipation. A concerted effort was begun to search out professionals and academics that can assist the program in providing basic life-skills training at little or no cost to the grant program on an in-kind basis. These resources can provide real world information to the teens about short and long term situations that will affect them now and later as well as offering advice and support as a mentor would.

A policy committee consisting of IL Coordinators, Area Managers, Family Service Workers and Central Office Policy Personnel was formed to develop policy surrounding the Chafee legislation and to revise existing policy to conform to changes in program goals, activities and services. State Plan and operational policy and procedure is being revised to include and allow room and board support for teens who have aged out of foster care but are not pursuing further educational goals.

Information concerning the new CFCIP legislation was also shared with the DCFS Adoptions Unit so that interface policy could be evaluated and revised to include this former foster care population in IL services. The new law allows services to be extended to foster teens who were and will be adopted. Arkansas has already opted to serve non-IV-E eligible and former foster teens and provides assistance to teens who continue in areas of higher education or vocational training.

**STATE OF ARKANSAS**  
**FISCAL YEAR 2001**  
**APPLICATION FOR FUNDING**  
**CHAFEE FOSTER CARE PROGRAM**  
**INDPENDENCE PROGRAM**

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**CONTACT INFORMATION**

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## I. RESPONSIBLE STATE AGENCY

The Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) within the Arkansas Department of Human Services (EIN 6007389) is the state agency administering the Title IV-E and other Foster Care Programs. This Division will be responsible for the administration of the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program. The Chafee Foster Care Independence Program provides services to three (3) categories of clients:

1. Foster care youth, IV-E eligible and non IV-E eligible, between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one (16-21) participating in high school, secondary school or an equivalent technical program.
2. Former foster care youth up to the age of twenty-one (21) are eligible for post-discharge services if the youth was in foster care on his or her sixteenth (16th) birthday. Post-discharge services may include additional life-skills training, job search assistance, housing search assistance, community involvement, and board assistance if qualified and funds are available.
3. Foster teens age 14-15 are provided appropriate life skills training. These services have been provided for the past 5 years.

The Department of Human Services/Division of Children and Family Services/Chafee Foster Care Independence Program will cooperate in national/regional evaluations of programs implemented to achieve the purposes and goals of the Arkansas IV-E Chafee Foster Care Independence Program.

### **DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES THAT THE STATE PLANS TO CARRY OUT WITH ALLOTTED FUNDS AND HOW THE STATE PLANS TO BUILD ON ACTIVITIES AND EXPENDITURES FROM PRIOR FISCAL YEARS.**

- **Teen's Acquisition of Life-Skills**

Teens, 14 or older, are assessed upon entry into foster care or on their 14th birthday if already in foster care to determine their basic life-skills levels. A case plan/transitional plan for the teen is then developed by the case manager (Family Service Worker) in conjunction with those involved with the teen's case, i.e. the teen, CFCIP Coordinator, foster parent, sponsor, etc. to meet the teen's training/educational needs for skills acquisition. Individual and group training of foster teens is provided in each of Arkansas' ten service areas (see Attachment C) concerning acquisition of knowledge and skills about post-secondary educational planning, opportunities and requirements, housing, financial management, job and career opportunities and requirements, community resources, health and personal appearance and various other skills needed to master transition to adulthood.

- **Life-Skills Resources**

Life-skills teaching resources are continually being recruited and utilized in the service areas to insure that instruction is available in each of the life-skills categories and sub-categories that are part of the overall curriculum of life-skills training. Educational institutions, public and private agencies, individuals in business, community groups, churches and dedicated volunteers are recruited and used to provide life-skills training for teens. This utilization also provides positive public relations for the CFCIP program.

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- **Adult Resources and Training**

Individual and group training for foster parents and teen sponsors is being provided, developed further and expanded to increase the knowledge and skills of this population in dealing with foster teens and assisting with life-skills development and reinforcement. Teen sponsors are those individuals in the community who agree to assist and monitor teens in out-of-home placements such as dorms or apartments. They may or may not be foster parents but are required to attend staffings and provide oversight for living arrangements and act as mentors for those teens. They also serve as payees for room and board assistance and monitor budgeting and bill paying for the teens and provide assistance as required.

- **Aftercare for Youth 18-21**

All life-skills training continues to be available to teens that have aged out of foster care up to age 21. In addition, they are still eligible for one-on-one counseling and staff assistance in the areas of housing, employment, financial management and transportation. If they choose to voluntarily remain in care after age 18 and continue their educational pursuits, they are also eligible for financial assistance with tuition, fees, books and room and board expenses. Teens who opt to leave care at age 18 or before age 21 will remain eligible for financial assistance with start-up items and room and board on an as requested, funds-available basis. Policy and procedure to comply with the CFCIP legislation is being developed for promulgation concerning the eligibility and limitations of financial support for former foster care clients. Services are also available to adoptees who were formerly in foster care.

### **Room and Board**

**Room and board is currently defined as CFCIP funding assistance for rent, utility deposits and food for foster teens who are age 18 or older and have emancipated from care and custody of the state. Basic housekeeping items are also included in this definition as “start-up” items to insure that needed items to begin basic housekeeping are available.**

Room and board payments for eligible youth who have aged out of foster care and request assistance will be limited in policy to up to \$500 per month for a maximum of three months, consecutive or not, and start-up assistance will be limited to a maximum of up to \$500. Start-up assistance will be limited to purchase of basic housekeeping items such as towels, sheets, cooking utensils, cleaning tools and safety items such as a fire extinguisher. Total assistance of up to \$2000 will be allowed for start-up and room and board. At this rate, it will be possible to serve a maximum of 80-90 eligible foster youth within the limits of 30% of the grant award.

- **Youth Advisory Board**

Arkansas’ Chafee Foster Care Independence Program has developed the guidelines, requirements, duties and functions of a Youth Advisory Board. This Board was first convened October 5, 2000. This board has an active role in the design and scope of programs and services offered to CFCIP participants and attend quarterly meeting with agency staff, CFCIP Coordinators and Management. They have viable input into their case plans and services offered to them to achieve their goal of self-sufficiency as well as represent the foster youth from their respective areas. Youth from all DCFS Areas of the state are represented and are encouraged to meet with other foster teens in their areas to determine relevant needs and program adjuncts and offer input and advice on ways to meet them.

- **Independent Living Program State Coordinator**

Continue the State Coordinator position that will be responsible for coordinating CFCIP services statewide.

- **Independent Living Program Area Coordinators**

Continue with the full-time coordinator position for Area VI and hire a second coordinator to assist with the area's large foster care youth population of approximately 130 youth age 14 and up. All are expected to attend life-skills training sessions.

Continue the full-time coordinator position for Area I and hire an additional Coordinator for this area also. This area's population currently exceeds 85 youth age 14 and older. This area, along with Area II, Northwest Arkansas, is the fastest growing area in the state with regard to children in foster care.

Hire a full-time CFCIP Coordinator for Area II. This position was formerly paid from the grant and the area still needs the full-time dedicated position.

The Area I, II and VI coordinators' duties will include: life-skills assessments of foster teens age 14 and older, completing CFCIP transition plans for each area's eligible youth; organizing and coordinating life skills training; coordinating placement of youth into transitional living residences; acting as liaison between foster care youth, DCFS staff, foster parents, foster care providers and other community professionals, developing community resources, developing mentoring resources and programs and serving as the area clearinghouse person for all activities and expenditures relating to CFCIP teens. These duties/responsibilities for grant-paid coordinators should be the same for non-grant paid coordinators in order to provide consistent services and curriculum for teens statewide.

The grant program plans to continue assisting with CFCIP related travel and related program expenses for the additional 15 CFCIP Coordinators in Areas III, IV, V, VII, VIII, IX and X that are now providing CFCIP services in those areas. Any expenses related to duties other than CFCIP will be charged to the appropriate county/area office. These non-grant CFCIP Coordinators provided by the Division of Children and Family Services will fulfill the same duties and functions as the full-time grant-paid positions.

- **Secretary**

Utilize a secretarial/administrative assistant position, to assist with the coordination of statewide program services including the annual Teen Conference, training sessions and other events, maintaining CFCIP records/files, editing the newsletter, overseeing volunteer clerks, tracking budgeted expenditures and monitoring the library resources.

- **Teen Conference**

The Eleventh Annual Teen Conference was held June 2-7, 2001. Arkansas' CFCIP coordinated and presented the conference instead of using CFCIP funds to contract for this service. There were 123 attendees plus guests and presenters for this conference. The Twelfth Annual Conference is planned for June 2002 as two, back-to-back, three-day conferences, the same as this year, to accommodate more foster teens and expand the life skills venue.

### **III. STATEWIDE SERVICES**

The Department of Human Services Division of Children and Family Services is divided statewide into ten (10) service areas. There is at least one Coordinator in each of the ten areas to coordinate life-

skills training and CFCIP services to the foster teens in the area. Only the area VI coordinator is paid directly from the grant. There is a monthly statewide meeting of all coordinators to discuss problems, solutions, plans, policy, procedure and integration of services across the delivery spectrum. The program currently utilizes DCFS caseworkers, foster parents, foster care providers, and community professionals to offer life-skills training state wide. A large amount of life skills training is currently provided on an individual basis by using the program's library training resources. The CFCIP library contains video tapes, workbooks, and games covering all of the topics addressed in the CFCIP case plans.

#### **IV. PROVISION OF AGE-APPROPRIATE AND EXPERIENCE-RELATED TRAINING AND SERVICES**

It is recognized that life-skills training for youth must be provided in accordance with their age and experience levels. Intake assessments for basic life-skills are now being done at age 14 to determine general age-appropriate life-skills training needs and again at age 16 to determine more specific training needs and to develop the transitional case-plan that is made part of the permanent case-plan. Life-skills trainings are generally designed to fit the age group that attends a particular session and teens that are 18 or older are trained in much more detail and often in one-on-one sessions to fill gaps left from more general trainings in group settings. Teens age 16 or older are assessed at six-month intervals to determine progress towards skills and knowledge acquisition as outlined in their transition plan. Case-plans and transitional plans are modified as required or needed as indicated by ongoing assessments and evolving case goals. Training for younger teens will usually be more general in nature and oriented toward broader goals such as staying in school, drug avoidance education, sexual aspects of adolescents, teamwork, respect, etc. training for older teens gets more specific in subject matter and includes items such as financial management, transportation and employment are addressed.

#### **V. PUBLIC/PRIVATE SECTOR INVOLVEMENT**

Since the Chafee legislation was passed in December 1999, this grant program has been providing information to interested parties, both public and private, in order to obtain feedback and recommendations concerning staffing, service delivery, community involvement/ partnerships, and resource/curriculum expansion. Meetings with foster parent groups, both local and statewide, have provided valuable information concerning training needs, teaching responsibilities, information sharing, documentation as well as defining responsibilities of all parties involved. The National Resource Center has conducted two comprehensive meetings to assist in the plan development for Arkansas' CFCIP. Those meetings and planning sessions included all levels of agency staff (foster care, adoption program staff), foster parents, service providers, and representatives from the legal community. Small group assignments included idea development from many diverse and occasionally biased perspectives. All were included in the summary information. The Chafee legislation was also discussed with the Youth Advisory Board and they were given an opportunity to critique program and agency practices as well as policy and procedures that are being developed.

Arkansas' Chafee Foster Care Independence Program will continue to develop a state/area/county/city resource base of individuals, institutions, corporations, educational facilities, funding sources, and other interested parties that can provide input into future plans and fill service needs that the agency cannot meet. From providing transportation to mentoring, partnerships are being explored and developed with public and private resources to help the agency provide services and to help the teens reach their goals. Resources information will be maintained within the CHRIS computer information system. Information concerning services, locations and personnel will also be included on the Department of Human Services website, DHS GOLD.

## **VI. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR BENEFITS AND SERVICES**

Arkansas will use the following criteria for determining a youth's eligibility for benefits and services under the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program: The youth must:

1. Be in foster care in custody of the state and likely to remain in foster care until age 18.
2. Have a case-plan goal of independence or adoption
3. Be actively engaged in an educational program such as high school, GED or post-secondary education.
4. If age 18 or over, has agreed to remain in foster care to continue their eligibility for CFCIP educational assistance services that include financial assistance with tuition, books, fees and room and board.
5. If age 18-20 and out of care, a youth that was in foster care prior to their 18th birthday may apply for room and board assistance and start-up aid. This assistance/aid will be provided on a limited as requested, funds available basis as long as there are funds available and the total expenditures do not exceed 30% of the grant award. It is estimated that up to 80-90 youth per grant period may take advantage of these services.

## **VII. FAIR AND EQUITABLE TREATMENT OF BENEFIT RECIPIENTS**

All programs and services are equally available to all Children and Family Service areas through Independent Living Coordinators assigned to each of the ten (10) service areas. As long as funds are available, services and benefits may be requested, arranged for and received for any eligible foster teen in any area at any time. The Department of Human Services and the Division of Children and Family Services fully complies with agency policy concerning Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act.

## **VIII. TRAINING**

The Division of Children and Family Services is providing an ever-expanding training curriculum for foster parents, adoptive parents, group home workers and case managers addressing issues concerning preparing teens for independent living. Training and workshops are held in all service areas, as well as statewide, on a regular basis in order to develop a better understanding of the transitional process for teens and to offer methods and means to assist the adults listed above in dealing with those teens. Training for foster parents and Mid-South Training Academy and DCFS Professional Development will provide others. They are paid for through Title IV-E training funds. The training curriculum will be addressed in the State Plan.

**FFY 2001  
CFCIP Funds Requested**

CFCIP Federal Funds Requested                   **\$ 682,373**

State Match Amount (20%)                       **\$ 170,593**

Sources:

Donations

Time and Expenses of Volunteers

State funds used for IL teens' board payments

**Estimated Expenditures of FY2001 CFCIP Funds**

Amount of Federal Funds to be Used for Room and Board	Up to	<b>\$204,712</b>
Salaries and Matching		
State ILP Coordinator		
Secretary		
Area I Coordinators (2)		
Area II Coordinator		
Area VI Coordinators (2)		
Sub-total		<b>194,424</b>
Teen Conference 2002		<b>23,000</b>
ILP Staff Training		<b>24,000</b>
Direct Funding Assistance for Teens and Program Maintenance		<b>168,000</b>
<u>Indirect and Allocated Cost (10%)</u>		<u><b>68,237</b></u>
Total		<u><b>\$ 682,373</b></u>

## Addendum to the 2001 APSR

### Chafee Foster Care Independence Program

Information concerning the new Chafee legislation and the Medicaid expansion was discussed with representatives of DHS and DCFS. A meeting was held to discuss the implementations of the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program law and its impact on Medicaid. Below is an outline of what is recommended:

Those in attendance were given a copy of the act and a discussion was held concerning the implementation of the state's option to extend Medicaid benefits to former foster teens age 18-21. The act raised the asset limit to \$10,000 for eligible teens and implies that Medicaid benefits should be extended to foster teens. However, the act still left it up to the state to decide how much, if any, benefits should be extended and the state could provide the benefits to none, some or all the eligible teens. Congress' reasoning was that these teens have been a population that has fallen through the cracks when medical assistance was needed and that this was a reasonable method to provide them with medical assistance during the final stages of transition to adulthood.

The ILP Statewide Coordinator's recommendations after talking to other states that were implementing it were that Arkansas should also adopt the extension on benefits. Other states had indicated that the cost and usage, in their experience, was minimal and did not noticeably increase the Medicaid burden. Yet, it provided necessary help until the youth could become employed or find other medical coverage options.

The OCC, DCFS Director's office and DHS Director's office representatives recommended taking the proposal under advisement to try and determine what the additional dollar cost to Medicaid would be. I believe that there was a time frame of 30 days set to report back with recommendations as to what the Department and the State's position would or should be.

#### **Multiethnic Placement Act and Interethnic Adoption Provisions**

On April 19, 2001, the DCFS Policy I-E was updated to specifically address compliance with MEPA. It states definitively that the Division must comply with MEPA in making foster care and adoption placements.

Attached is a copy of page 10 from the policy manual which underlines all of the changes made in connection with MEPA.

## LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

The Arkansas General Assembly enacted legislation during the 2001 legislative session that impact Arkansas' Child Welfare System. Various revisions were made to the Juvenile code and the Child Maltreatment Act to improve service delivery to families. The major legislative acts and their key implications are as follows:

**Act 383 (HB 1316):** Amended the Adoptions Jurisdiction law by providing that the state shall possess jurisdiction over the adoption of a minor if the person seeking to adopt the child or the child is a resident of this state. The also establishes criteria for residency.

**ACT 1029 (HB 1824): Amended** the Adoption Jurisdiction and Guardianship Jurisdiction laws to provide that adoption or guardianship petitions related to a juvenile in an open juvenile case shall be filed in same juvenile court case.

**ACT 1503 (HB 1766):** Amended the Juvenile Code to give new definitions for Abandoned Infant, Abuse, Deviate Sexual Activity, Forcible Compulsion, Indecent Exposure, Neglect and Pornography. Replaces the definition of long-term foster care with Independence and provides a clearer definition of Reasonable Efforts.

**Safe Haven - ACT 236 (HB1070):** Provides for voluntary, anonymous delivery of an infant (30 days or younger) to law enforcement or hospital staff who shall take a 72 hour hold and contact DCFS who shall initiate a dependency petition. It also creates an affirmative defense to any prosecution for endangerment of a minor.

**Family Preservation Services - ACT 906 (SB 303):** Amended the Family Preservation Law to further define family preservation services to include intensive family services, follow-up care to families when a child is returned home, respite care, parenting and pre-placement preventive services to families, including adoptive, extended families and families at risk or in crisis. It requires these services for all cases where a child is about to be removed from home or has been removed and the goal is reunification.

**DHS Custody - ACT 1245 (HB 2280):** Requires DHS to locate and notify the custodial parent(s) of their child's location when DHS takes custody of the child due to the action of someone other than the custodial parent(s). It further provides that DHS can not withhold custody from the child's custodial parent(s) unless a dependency-neglect petition is filed naming the parent(s) as a party.

**D-N Indigent Parent Counsel - ACT 1267 (HB 1550):** Establishes a program for representation of indigent parents in dependency-neglect cases. The Arkansas Supreme Court will establish qualifications and standards of practice and juvenile judges will submit orders for payment of reasonable attorney fees and expenses based on a formula developed by the AOC and approved by the Juvenile Division Judges.

**ACT 1532 (SB 697):** Appropriates \$1,360,000 for FY 2002 and FY 2003 for indigent parent counsel in dependency-neglect cases. (E)

**Home Studies - ACT 1420 (HB 1704):** Relieves DHS from providing home studies and supervision unless the court (excluding juvenile division courts for home studies) has first determined that the party is indigent.

**Kinship Care - ACT 1435 (HB 1693):** Amends the definition of “kinship foster parent” to require compliance with training, background checks and home study requirements.

**Grandparent Notice & Opportunity To Be Heard - ACT 1497 (HB 1047):** Provides grandparents the right to notice and an opportunity to be heard in a child custody or dependency-neglect case if the following conditions are present:

**Crimes Against Children Division - ACT 441 (SB 346):** Changes the name of the State Police Family Protection Unit (FPU) to the Crimes Against Children Division (CACD).

**Child Maltreatment - ACT 1210 (HB 1765):** DHS legislation that revises various provisions of the Child Maltreatment act including definitions to conform with the juvenile code, maltreatment records, reporting, investigations, administrative hearings, protective custody, privileged communication and custody.

**Child Maltreatment Registry - ACT 1434 (HB 1692):** Requires DHS to categorize types of maltreatment and to provide for the removal of certain offenders from the child maltreatment registry.