

SUMMARY EXPLANATION

Subject: Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR) 2002

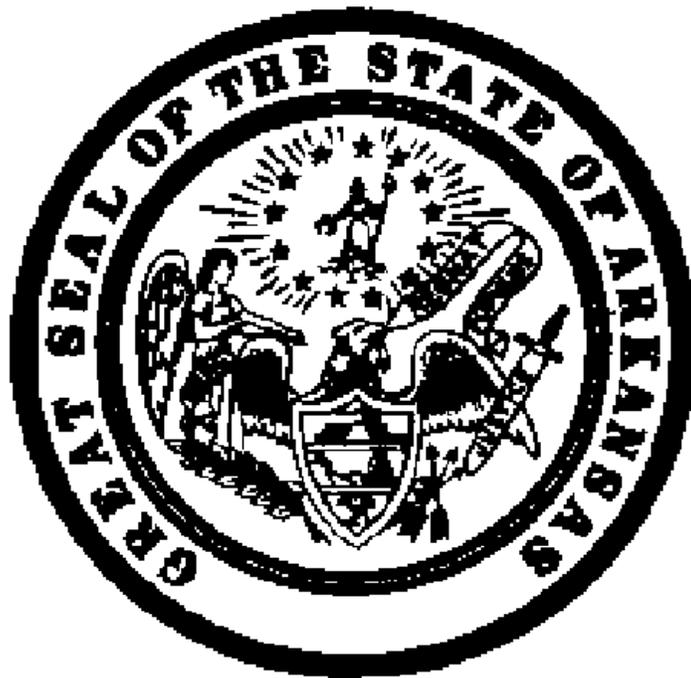
The Annual Progress and Services Report details the services the state has provided under the federal Title IV-B program. The state of Arkansas is required by federal law to report, on an annual basis, the progress made in the past fiscal year toward meeting each a goal and objective, including improved outcomes for children and families, and a more comprehensive, coordinated, effective child and family services continuum. Service areas detailed in the report include child protective services, foster care, adoption, family preservation services, and independent living.

1/14/03

STATE OF ARKANSAS

**ANNUAL PROGRESS AND
SERVICE REPORT**

JUNE 30, 2002



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, Slot S570
Little Rock, Arkansas 72203-1437

REPORT ON THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PROGRESS FFY 2002

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 those 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, 2002

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 is 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, 2003

STATUS – Once we finalize a profile of families currently being served, we can then, utilizing state demographic data, identify families that may need Division services.

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

Task 2: Develop a report identifying services currently available and unmet service needs, by county. Accomplish Date: Revised to July 2004

STATUS – On target and on going. An initial 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 July 2004.

There have been a number of needs analysis conducted in the last year.

- 1. The Division conducted 58 focus groups in all areas of the state with consumers, foster youth, and established community groups, foster and adoptive parents. The feedback is being used to analyze service needs.***
- 2. The Division participated in a survey of states and their rural counties for the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) Subcommittee on Rural Services. A draft report has been prepared and identifies service needs and service accessibility statewide, but the results do not address county specific needs. We reviewed the draft, made recommendations for consideration and requested that the report include an analysis by county.***
- 3. The Center for the Study of Social Policy surveyed foster parents to assess their satisfaction with the current supports provided by DCFS and determines if foster parents could benefit from increased supports. 366 or 37% of the foster parents responded to the survey.***
- 4. The Division surveyed adoptive parents to assess their satisfaction with the current supports provided by DCFS and to request input on service needs. 262 or 35% of the adoptive families responded to the survey. The Adoptions Unit is reviewing the input.***

The information listed under tasks 1 and 2 is also being used in developing the Program Improvement Plan in Permanency Outcome 1 – children have permanency and stability in their living situation. In addition, the Division is soliciting technical assistance from one of the National Resource Centers.

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: Revised to June 30, 2003*

STATUS – Completed and on going. 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 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. 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 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 July 2004

STATUS –Several documents available to DCFS are being used to identify the needs of children and families: CFSR Focus Group reports, the DCFS Needs Analysis, Center for the Study of Social policy Survey of Foster Parents report, the DCFS Survey of Adoptive Parents report, and the CWLA Rural Survey. Efforts are planned to review and revise services purchased to ensure that these address the needs of DCFS clients.

The information is being used in program planning and in development of the Program Improvement Plan in Safety Outcome 2 – Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.

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, 2003

STATUS – A volunteer management training was held February 8, 2002 with DCFS supervisors. A plan was developed to assist in determining how volunteers could be used to enhance the quality of services provided. Some of the ideas put forward included the following: enrolling foster children in Big Brothers/Big Sisters programs, designing mentor projects to serve families, children and independent living youth, recruiting advocates for grandparents and other relative caregivers to provide training in areas such as how to access legal and government systems, teaching parenting classes, and providing tutors for foster children.

Task 2: Develop an evaluation tool for the program. Accomplish Date: *Revise to March 31, 2003*

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, 2003*

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, 2004*

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. This task was revised to survey current IFS providers and field staff regarding their opinions concerning the components of the IFS program description and solicit suggestions for change. Accomplishment Date revised to: June 30, 2002

STATUS – Completed. Surveyed current IFS providers and field staff regarding their opinions concerning the components of the IFS program description and suggestions for needed changes.

The most significant and recurrent responses to the survey included the following: (1) referrals for IFS needed to be for families that were the most likely to benefit from the service; (2) funds were needed to help IFS families with day-to-day needs; (3) the IFS time limitation of 12 weeks needed to be extended; and (4) IFS families needed more information about community resources. Solutions to address these issues were developed and approved by DCFS Executive Staff.

The solutions developed to address the goal of enhancing IFS included the following : (1) development of criteria for appropriate family characteristics for IFS to assist field staff in the referral decision process; (2) informing IFS providers of the availability of DCFS county cash assistance funds and the process by which to request those funds; and (3) granting County Supervisors approval authority to extend IFS for an additional three weeks. These changes were implemented by (1) development of an IFS Referral Screening form and referral to the DCFS Policy Unit for issuance; (2) revising DCFS IFS policy; and (3) revising the IFS Program Description and IFS contract Performance Indicators.

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, 2003

STATUS – The Quality Assurance Unit produces an annual report on IFS. The report for SFY 2000 was reviewed. Data on the IFS cases did not indicate that the service made a significant difference in the family outcomes regarding repeat reports of child maltreatment and prevention/reunification of foster care placement. The results contributed to the revision of Task 1.

Information and suggestions from those most experienced with IFS (survey of field staff and IFS providers) resulted in program changes which may positively impact future outcomes for families. Monitoring and evaluation of IFS needs to be an ongoing activity. The annual report has been broadened to include all family preservation services and may not be IFS-specific as in the past. Any specific information on IFS will be reviewed. Other avenues for monitoring and evaluation will also be developed.

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 by consulting with experts and with other states. Accomplish Date: Revised to June 30, 2003

STATUS – During this time period there has been a thorough review of IFS case records and input from field staff and providers. Efforts are underway to develop CHRIS reports on families receiving IFS. Internal and external research is ongoing.

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: Revised to June 2003

STATUS – The survey of field staff and IFS providers was critical in our analysis of the IFS program and implementation of program changes in our efforts to increase the availability of IFS. The results of the survey led to changes in the IFS program description, policy, and contract performance indicators. The next contract year (SFY 2003) will see an increase of IFS availability by four counties for a total of 41 counties (40 DCFS contract/1 direct DCFS staff). Efforts to increase the availability of IFS are ongoing.

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.

This will be addressed in the Program Improvement Plan, Outcome P1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.

***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 the following: too many staff entering data, data entered erroneously and information being entered repeatedly.

Work was done to clean up the resource data, and modifications were made to the system to restrict the entering of new contracted resources to designated staff only. The system’s method of cataloging the information is being reviewed and once changes are made, a final review of the data will be completed, the Contracts Management Unit (CMU) staff will maintain the data.

In addition, the Contracts Management Unit will conduct a meeting with the Area Managers to provide information about the FY 2003 contracts. CMU staff will then meet individually in each Area with area staff to provide information about FY 2003 contracted services. Reports of contract services are sent twice a year 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 July 2004

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 survey, the Division will develop a report that identifies services needed by county.

This will be addressed in the Program Improvement Plan, Safety Outcome S2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.

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) 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 not available. Accomplish Date: July 2004 and on going.

STATUS – On going. The goal of the Division continues to be recruitment of 80 new homes per quarter. DCFS continues to strive to recruit a sufficient number of new foster homes. In April – June 2001 the state recruited 54 homes, July - September 2001 recruited 59 homes, in October - December 2001 the state recruited 64 homes, January - March 2002 the state recruited 71 homes.

This will be addressed in the Program Improvement Plan, Outcome P1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.

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: July 2004

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

This will be addressed in the Program Improvement Plan, Outcome P1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.

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 2004

STATUS –On Target. A statewide plan for improving foster children’s access to mental health services has been developed and is currently being distributed. DCFS continues to work with the Divisions of Mental Health, Youth Services, Medical Services and Developmental Disabilities, the Council of Community Mental Health Centers and other providers to develop an implementation plan for mental health services for foster children. This statewide mental health collaborative continues to meet, and a local collaborative for Pulaski County between the Division, the Division of Mental Health and local providers including Community Mental Health Centers continues to meet to identify and coordinate mental health service needs for foster children in this county

Members of the Foster Child Mental Health Collaborative identified these themes:

- 1. To review the current intake and referral process, share assessment data, identify consent for treatment and include responsible and appropriate adult participation.***
- 2. Comprehensive health assessments completed will be shared with the mental health professional.***
- 3. There is a coordination of care among all professional entities involved in the child and with family i.e. DCFS, Mental Health and other professionals.***

4. ***Identify and create if needed an array of services that provide a minimum level of service capacity in all regions.***
5. ***The PIP will describe further the efforts needed to meet substantially achieve Outcome WB 3 – Children receives services to meet the physical and mental health needs.***

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, 2003

STATUS – On target. Areas I, II, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII and X have develop adoption support groups at this time. Area III and IX 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 – A statewide newsletter has been developed and will be published in September 2002. 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 2001. 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.

The Division has submitted information on 60 children to the National Adoption Exchange, US KIDS and will be providing current photos on these children to submit by the end of this year. In addition, the state continues to increase adoptions by 10% annually.

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 developed an automated system to track all in-state and out-of-state referrals better. The Division of Youth Services on July 1, 2000 assumed operation of Interstate Compact on Juveniles. ICPC staff were cross-trained and cases are distributed alphabetically among ICPC staff. The unit worked off a backlog of referrals. Clear procedures and time frames were 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 – Research on the use of finders' fees has been completed. A plan with recommendations has been developed for review and approval by Executive Staff.

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

Objective 5: 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: In conjunction with Office of Chief Counsel (OCC), workers will conduct Permanency Planning Hearings in accordance to policy.
STATUS – Task Completed 2000.

Task 2: OCC will review 100% of their cases in July 1999, to assure compliance.
STATUS – Task Completed 2000.

Task 3: CHRIS will continue the development of a monitoring tool to track children in care 15 of 22 months.
STATUS – Task Completed 2000.

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

STATUS – Task Completed. OCC has reviewed all cases, CHRIS produces a Permanency Planning Detail report on a monthly basis for OCC and area staff, and efforts are coordinated with the Administrative Offices of the Courts. In addition, the 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 5th 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 – Completed. The Foster Care Board Payments and Adoption Subsidies programming changes are in place and operational in CHRIS. Also as part of this financial process, the Foster Care Trust Accounting process was 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 – Completed - The CHRIS system includes a method for maintaining current resource information, but it was determined that there were problems with this system including the following: too many staff entering data, data entered erroneously and information being entered repeatedly.

Work was done to clean up the resource data, and modifications were made to the system to restrict the entering of new contracted resources to designated staff only. The system's method of cataloging the information is being reviewed and once changes are made, a final review of the data will be completed, the Contracts Management Unit staff will maintain the data.

In addition, the Contracts Management Unit (CMU) will conduct a meeting with the Area Managers to provide information about the FY 2003 contracts. CMU staff will then meet individually in each Area with area staff to provide information about FY 2003 contracted services. Reports of contract services are sent twice a year to each county.

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: Train staff responsible for maintaining and updating resources. Accomplish Date: Revise to June 30, 2002 – Ongoing.

STATUS for task 1 and 2 - Work was done to clean up the data, modifications were made to the system to restrict the entry of new contracted resources to designated staff (CHRIS Helpdesk staff only). Once a final clean up of the resources and resource cataloging 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 – Completed. The specifications, design and construction have been completed for an Eligibility Determination function. The function is fully operational and available statewide.

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 in operation for over a 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 add reports for Division management and staff.

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. Due to a number of SACWIS requirements still needed in the CHRIS system, this task will be deleted.

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. Due to a number of SACWIS requirements still needed in the CHRIS system, this task will be deleted.

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. Due to a number of other Information Technology needs, this objective is being deleted.

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. Due to a number of SACWIS requirements still needed in the CHRIS system, this task will be deleted.

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

All job listings are available on the State of Arkansas website. This includes information on how to apply for the job and a blank job application form.

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

STATUS – Completed 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, 2003

STATUS – A draft curriculum by MidSOUTH has been developed and was reviewed by DCFS Executive Staff. It will be implemented beginning in September 2002. There will be three presentations a year for new supervisors.

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 – On going. The curriculum for pre-service Family Service Worker (FSW) training was revised in 2001 to incorporate CHRIS training and to alter contents to reflect Arkansas State Police, Crimes Against Children Unit's role in investigations. The curriculum was piloted, evaluated and adopted for statewide use. The curriculum is based on a competency model. In addition, an Individual Training Needs Assessment was 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. .

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: Revise to September 1, 2003

STATUS – Division staff and contractor completed a Workload Analysis, a data collection methodology, used to measure the workloads of the Family Service Workers. The data collection began in February 2001. A report published in 2002 outlining the results was prepared and presented to Executive staff for necessary action.

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 – On going – The Office of Chief Counsel, Audit Section conducted a review of worker training and retention of 165 Family Service Worker staff that attended training for the period July 2000 through June 2001. The study consisted of a mail-out survey to all Family Service Workers, face-to-face interviews with current staff and telephone interviews with former staff. A draft report has been prepared and is currently under internal review. Information from the report will be used in the worker recruitment and retention efforts.

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

STATUS – Completed, as there is a flex schedule option in the county office for direct field staff. It was discovered that staff do not find this a useful option and the Worker Recruitment and Retention Committee recommended exploring the possibility of having on-call staff positions.

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 – Completed and on going - 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. 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 funding to purchase services 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 may be purchased from a variety of organizations including child welfare agencies, private psychiatric hospitals, community-based agencies, universities, other state divisions, licensed individuals, and hospitals. 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.
- 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.
- Home studies for child placement determination

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 deaf interpretation services, and tutoring services.
- Adoption Support: Home studies, adoption home studies, recruitment and life books, 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.
- Child Protective Services – Services to preserve families and protect children encompass a comprehensive continuum of services designed to address the life needs of the child and the family. These services include concrete services such as: housing, transportation, cash assistance, rental deposit, food, and direct therapeutic intervention both for the family, as a whole, and for individual family members. The array of services to preserve families and protect children are either direct or purchased services.
- Adoption Promotion - Services and activities designed to encourage more adoptions out of the foster care system, when adoptions promote the best interest of children, including such activities as pre- and post- adoptive services and activities designed to expedite the adoption process and support adoptive families.
- Independent Living Services - Each child in DHS custody, age fourteen or older, for whom the goal is not reunification shall be provided with instruction for development of basic life skills. Each child, age sixteen or older, shall be assessed every six (6) months to determine the progress in acquiring basic life skills. Services identified in the assessment to help the child achieve independence will be provided either directly or through contract. Each foster parent caring for, or interested in caring for, a child age fourteen or older, and each Family Service Worker responsible for any children, age fourteen or older, shall receive training in helping children acquire basic life skills.

The Program Improvement Plan – Outcome Safety 2, Item 3 action step details a need to develop a system to assess and address service needs that may change these services listed above. In addition, there are changes being planned in the Independent Living Services program.

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.

SAFE HAVEN ACT

If applicable, describe infant safe haven programs that the State currently provides or plans to provide in FY 2003 (section 431 (a)(1) of the Act).

The following DCFS policy reflects Arkansas law about Safe Haven Policy (VIII-E): Birth Parents Relinquishing Infants for Adoption

The Division shall provides services to birth/legal parents who are planning to relinquish infants for adoption or who have relinquished their infant to a medical provider or law enforcement agency under the provision of the Safe Haven Act.

The Safe Haven Act allows a parent of a child who is 30 days old or younger to voluntarily leave or deliver the child to a medical provide or law enforcement agency. Although the statute does not require a court order, DHS will petition the court for an order of emergency custody. The parent must not express any intent to return for the child. DHS takes custody of the child.

Procedure (VIII-E1): Birth Parents Relinquishing Infants for Adoption

Some of the procedures include completing an Intake Study and the Biological Family Background Information form CFS-456 through face-to-face contacts with parent(s). Other activities include the following: identify specific problems or needs, help parents understand their rights, advise the putative father of the Putative Father's Registry, comply with the Indian Child Welfare Act if there is Indian ancestry in their parent's family, develop a case plan and address counseling services, health services and post-placement services, assist the mother to apply for Medicaid, and apply for Medicaid for the infant. Contact parents at least once during the ten (10) day revocation period and contact parents monthly for at least six (6) months.

Procedure (VIII-E2): Voluntary Delivery of an Infant under the Provisions of the Safe Haven Action.

Procedures that outline medical provider or law enforcement can take possession (72 hour hold) of a child who is:

- Thirty (30) days old or younger, and

- Left with or voluntarily delivered to them by the child's parent, who does not express an intent to return for the child

Outlines procedures for the family service worker and the adoption specialist when the medical provider takes the infant into custody or law enforcement agency.

At this time, the state has not received any infant voluntarily relinquished by a parent under this act.

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: 2002 – 2003 Academic Partnership in Public Child Welfare

A new contract with the University of Arkansas (U of A) will begin 7/1/02 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 quarterly 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 every other month 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 training topics 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.

2002 – 2003 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 7/1/02. 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. As well as quarterly oversight by DCFS executive staff in management level meetings.

MidSOUTH will deliver all DCFS new staff training through its training staff at its five training centers and contracted trainers at off site locations. 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.
- Complete Leadership Curriculum for Family Service Worker Supervisors by FY 03.
- Individual Training Needs Assessment (ITNA) for FSWs, supervisors, and foster parents will inform the system of continuing education needs 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. Two (2) staff were approved and are currently enrolled in the MSW educational leave under new policy that was effective October 2001.

31 Stipend students initially enrolled, 26 were in the program and five (5) have graduated. These students committed 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

Training topics and accomplishments for FY 2002

Children and Youth Topics

Working with Teenagers: It's Not Personal
Identifying Oppositional and Compliant Teens
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity
Working with Adolescents

Family Service Workers Enhanced Training

Writing Measurable Case Plans
Adoption Safe Families Act
Intermediate Interviewing Skills
Sensory Processing: What Is It?
Time Management

Additional Training Plans for FY 2003

The universities will develop and maintain a database to record all training provided through both MidSOUTH and the UAF Partnership.

The supervisor training provided by MidSOUTH is undergoing revision to exclude material duplicated in DHS mandated supervisory training, and enhance techniques in supervision of field staff.

DCFS is developing an agency orientation consistent with COA guidelines, and the full training component within DCFS and our educational partners is moving towards COA compliance.

DCFS and the UAF Partnership are working towards achieving standardization of ongoing training throughout the partner universities.

A class is now provided that will allow social work students the ability to complete the first five modules of the New Worker Training prior to graduation. This will provide for a quicker passage through the usual training requirements for new DCFS employees.

Training will be provided in four (4) separate events and will be specifically designed for licensed residential childcare providers on foster care, adoptions, permanency, and case plans.

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. This training will, to the extent possible, be coordinated with the independent living program conducted for adolescents. It is incorporated into the FSW new staff training and the Foster/Adopt PRIDE curricula.

Maximum Liability for the contract with UALR

\$4,774,131 federal IV-E + \$4,170, 158 University match = \$8,944,289

Maximum Liability for the contract with U of A at Fayetteville

\$2,816,397 federal IV-E + 2, 796,218 University match = \$5,612,615

The Division also uses state general revenues to fund training for staff.

Research and evaluation are noted in several outcomes and tasks listed in the Goal section at the beginning of this plan.

Management information systems – are addressed under Goal 4: Enhance automated systems to increase the agency's capacity to administer and manage fiscal and programmatic requirements page 14 of the plan.

In addition several training tasks have been identified to meet items and outcomes outlined in the Child and Family Service Review are detailed throughout the Program Improvement Plan.

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);

Foster Parent Recruitment

In June 2001 Arkansas had a pool of 1,015 Family Foster Homes. There were 1,814 children placed in foster homes (kinship and non-kinship). Sixty-four percent of the foster children were White, 35% were Black, and 1% was other (Asian, Hispanic, and Native American). The division continues to make every effort to recruit a sufficient number of new foster homes. It has been determined that the most effective method of recruitment is staff to sharing the responsibility with contracted providers. For the last two years, the Division has conducted meetings with Foster Parent Recruiters (Contracted) and area staff, to ensure that all have the same information and to discuss the county foster home needs, recruitment plans, and the contract performance indicators.

Incentives were included in the foster parent recruiter's contract for targeted recruitment for homes that care for teenagers, pregnant teens, sibling groups and children with special needs.

Recruitment Activities:

I. Media

- Cable Access and local TV Public Service Announcements
- Radio Public Service Announcements
- Local newspaper advertisements

II. Community Awareness

- Speaking engagements to civic groups, faith – based organizations, schools, and business organizations.
- Information booths set up at area conferences, fairs, and other special events.
- Foster Care Website
- Support Activities – Attend foster parent support groups.
- Currently the following support groups are in operation.

Saline Co. F.P. Assoc.	Pulaski Co. F.P. Assoc.
Garland Co.	Clark Co.
Scott Co.	S.E. Ar. F. P.
S.W. Ar. F.P.	Miller Co.
Marion Co.	Lonoke Co. F. P.
Washington Co.	Sebastian Co.
St. Francis Co.	Jefferson Co. F.P.
Union Co.	Columbia Co.

In SFY 2001, 325 new homes were opened.

FOSTER CARE RECRUITMENT PLAN 2002-2004

The division continues to make every effort to recruit a sufficient number of new foster homes.

Foster Children

White	Black	ASIAN	AIAN	NAPI	Unknown	Total
3,677	2,201	30	59	27	84	*5,898
0-5 years		6-11 years		12-14 years		15+ years
1,748		1,558		1,362		1,036
Male		Female				
2,770		2,934				

Foster Care Resources

		Total									
Type	Gender	Resource	White	Black	ASIAN	AIAN	NAPI	Other	Unknown	Total	
Foster Home – (Non-Relative)											
	Female		421	129	289	0	0	2	0	2	422
	Male		662	500	160	1	1	2	0	1	665
	Unknown		71	12	14	0	0	0	0	45	71
Relative Foster Home - (Kinship Only)											
	Female		66	17	48	1	0	0	0	0	66
	Male		45	24	20	0	0	0	0	1	45
	Unknown		22	5	3	0	0	0	0	14	22
Relative Foster Home (Fostering and Kinship)											
	Female		4	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	4
	Male		1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Unknown		1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total			1,293	689	537	2	1	4	0	64	*1,297

*More than one race can be selected.

Data from the SFY 2001 Annual Report Card.

Goal I: To improve DCFS Foster Parent Recruitment efforts.

Objective 1: To shorten time frames, so that recruiters respond to prospective foster parents in a more timely manner.

Task 1: To meet with Area Staff and Recruiters quarterly to discuss problems and concerns that relates to recruitment.

Accomplish Date: July 1999 and on going

Task 2: Develop procedures to put time frames in place to prevent delay in responding to foster parent inquiry.

Accomplish Date: July 2002 and on going

Goal 2: Increase the number of foster homes, and meet the needs as identified by County Supervisors in the county foster home needs assessment.

Objective: To open 80 new foster homes each quarter.

Task 1: County Supervisors will define the number and types of foster homes needed each year.

Accomplish Date: On going

Task 2: Recruiters will develop a recruitment plan based on the county's need assessments.

Accomplish Date: On going

Task 3: Recruiters will do targeted recruitment for foster homes that will care for teenagers, sibling groups, and pregnant teens and children with special needs.

Accomplish Date: On going

Task 4: DCFS and Recruiters will develop public service announcements to educate the public regarding the need for regular foster homes and for foster homes that will care for teenagers, sibling groups, and pregnant teens and children with special needs.

Accomplish Date: On going

Foster Parent Recruitment is also being addressed in the Program Improvement Plan, Outcome P1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations and in Outcome P2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.

ADOPTION RECRUITMENT PLAN FFYS 2000-2004

In May 2001, Arkansas had a pool of 169 approved adoptive families waiting for children. Of that 169 families, 38 or 22% were African-American. Although the number of families 90 has increased, the percentage of approved families that are African-American has decreased slightly from the 22 or 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. 44% of the children available for adoption were African-American. 54% were Caucasian children. Of the 469 children, 115 or 23% of these children are living in pre-adoptive homes.

For SFY 2001, 398 children were placed in adoptive homes; 140 or 36% were African-American 248 or 63% were Caucasian and 4 or 1% missing demographic information. This was an increase from the 352 children placed in adoptive homes in SFY 2000.

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

Status: This has been accomplished. The DCFS/Adoption Services Unit and the DHS Communication Director's Office have agreed that these children can be featured on a regular basis. This began with the April 2002 issue.

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

Status: This was completed in 2001.

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

Status: A tool for monitoring the progress of the Adoption Recruitment Plan on a quarterly basis has been developed. Staff was trained on the use of the tool at a quarterly staff meeting in January 2002.

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

Status: Support groups have been established in all Areas, except Areas III and IX. Both Areas plan to start groups by November 30, 2003.

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**

Status: Completed and updated with access to the public to children who need an adoptive home. The website includes a picture a biography on every child listed on the page and a child is featured every month. Telephone and email contact is provided on the site.

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

Status: Completed and updated with access to the public to children who need an adoptive home. The website includes a picture a biography on every child listed on the page and a child is featured every month. Telephone and email contact is provided on the site.

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

Status: This form was developed, and staff was trained on the use of the form at the quarterly staff meeting in January 2002.

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, and Adoption Supervisors
Secondary Responsibility: Adoption Services Unit and MidSOUTH Training Academy

Status: Adoption Specialists are doing concurrent planning with Family Service Workers when notified timely. There is some progress in this area, in that Family Service Workers are starting to invite Adoption Specialists to staffings. Foster families and other family members are being considered prior to looking for other approved adoptive families.

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

**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.

ADOPTION RECRUITMENT ACTIVITIES AND CROSS JURISDICTIONAL ACTIVITIES

The number of finalized adoptions is continuing to increase. During the federal fiscal year 2000, 311 adoptions were finalized. 352 children were placed with adoptive families during the state fiscal year 2000. 398 children were placed with adoptive families in the state fiscal year 2001. 362 adoptions were finalized during the federal fiscal year 2001.

Each DCFS Adoption Specialist has continued to have a statewide photo-listing album of children with special needs who are waiting for an adoptive family. The DCFS adoption web site of children with special needs who are waiting for an adoptive family has been maintained and enhanced with additional information about requirements, procedures, and staff. A statewide computer matching system has continued to assist in matching approved adoptive applicants with waiting children. Approved adoption home studies on prospective adoptive families from other states have continued to be received, particularly in relation to a child who is featured on the adoption web site or photo-listing album. As a result, a medically fragile, Caucasian child and an African American sibling group of two have been placed with out-of-state families. An out-of-state family has been selected for a Caucasian teenager and pre-placement visits are to be initiated. An out-of-state family had been selected for a medically fragile, African American child, but the foster family has expressed an interest in adopting the child, and that plan is being assessed.

A special project is underway to register children onto the national adoption exchange, Adopt Us Kids. The Division has continued to participate in the National Adoption Month Poster Project, sponsored by the North American Council on Adoptable Children. DCFS also utilized as a recruitment tool for adoptive parents for waiting children, "A Home for the Holidays", a CBS television special, sponsored by the Adoption Exchange Association and the Dave Thomas Foundation.

**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 been inter-country adoptions in Arkansas. The state agency has been involved in arranging for inter-country adoptions, and there have not been any reported inter-country adoption disruptions.

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.

The only activity the Adoptions Unit has been involved in was a request from the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to review a home study for an international adoption to determine compliance with child placement licensing requirements for adoption prior to it being forwarded to (INS). Most international adoptions that occur in Arkansas continue to be arranged by private agencies that are licensed to practice adoption in Arkansas. These agencies have the authority to approve compliance to child placement licensing requirements and to forward the home study to the Immigration and Naturalization Service and to provide post placement services.

A sibling group of two children in DCFS custody has been placed for adoption with a relative in Brazil. DCFS has provided post placement services at the request of a child welfare agency in Canada to a family in Arkansas who is in the process of adopting a young child from that country. DCFS also completed an adoption home study with that family prior to placement of the child. However, the Division was not involved in the arranging of the inter-country adoption.

Report the current activities regarding the collection and reporting of children who are adopted from other countries and enter as a result of a disruption or dissolution.

A CHRIS enhancement has been identified to allow for identification of children who are adopted from other countries and then enter foster care in Arkansas as a result of a disruption or dissolution. Currently CHRIS does not identify those children who were removed from an Inter-Country adoptive couple/single and placed in DHS custody. A solution is to add a new checkbox, Inter-Country Adoption, will become mandatory on the Removal screen when Father (Adoptive) or Mother (Adoptive) is selected in the Child Removed From picklist. This has been identified as a future CHRIS enhancement. The target date is 12/31/02. The reasons for disruption or dissolution, the agencies who handled the placement or adoption and the plans for the child can be captured in CHRIS (Conditions of removal, Services Provided and Case Plan). A report, Inter-Country Adoption Disruptions and Dissolution, will provide the number of these children by pulling the checked Inter-Country Adoptions.

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”.

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:

- Respite care and tutoring services for adopted children (via contract and purchase order)
- Honorariums for Annual Foster Parent Conference presenters
- Contract with former Adoption Specialist to register foster children with the National Adoption Exchange
- Layout and printing of adoption brochures
- Promotional items for recruitment (e.g., T-shirts, magnets, pens)
- Training for adoptive parents
- Camera equipment
- Television and newspaper advertising
- Production of a video tape for recruitment
- Books, video and audiotapes for adoption resource libraries.

The Division plans to purchase an Infocus machine and a laptop computer for PowerPoint presentations, more promotional items and advertising. The Division will also continue to pay for necessary services such as respite care.

KINSHIP CARE UPDATE

Kinship Care Update - Policy and procedures were revised to reflect ASFA final rules and regulations. Due to the findings from the Arkansas Child and Family Service Review, the Program Improvement Plan will be addressing Outcome P2, item 15 relative placements.

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 forty-nine counties. Group members must be referred by DCFS or a court order issued by a Juvenile Division of Circuit 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, and 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 DCFS 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.

All Family Support Specialists/Social Service Aides in the Division were trained in FY 02 and certified as Certified Parent Educators in active parenting of children from birth to 18 years old and can facilitate parent classes. These staff members are available in all county offices.

The “Parenting From Prison” program continues to be partially funded with Grant monies and includes mothers and fathers. 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. The community has recognized “Parents From Prison” 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 one contract for Non-Offending Caretaker Groups in one county. 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 (Perpetrator Groups) for adult offenders of child sexual abuse.

The Division funds services to providers who offer group therapy for adult male offenders of sexual abuse in twenty-six (26) counties. Participants are referred to group therapy by DCFS, law enforcement, or Arkansas Department of Corrections as a probationary regulation upon release.

The Perpetrator 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 support groups for child victims of sexual abuse.

Grant funds currently purchase contract services for Victim Support Groups through four (4) providers in ten (10) 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 V: 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 three (3) 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 and available in 75 counties.

Objective IX: The Alternative Kinship Caregivers pilot program was implemented in Pulaski County. Centers for Youth and Families facilitate the program. Kinship families receive weekly support. Services focus on custody and family law, parenting education, reunification techniques, and referrals for services.

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 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 eleven percent (11%) of children receiving services experienced a true report of maltreatment within one year of initiation of services and only thirteen percent (13%) 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 areas selected for improvement:

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, and there are plans to provide it in the Delta. 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.

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.

**CAPTA STATE GRANT FUNDS AND ANY CHANGES IN
ACTIVITIES FOR FY 2003 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.

Programs funded with CAPTA monies continue to provide support to the prevention of child abuse and neglect. Workers are referring to the preventive services in increasing numbers and our monitoring of best practice indicates the appropriateness of referrals.

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 to 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.

Performance Indicators for contract services funded under CAPTA have been rewritten to contain more specificity covering outcomes. Evaluation tools have been revised, and the parenting program has a pre- and post-test. Changes in CHRIS for an Information & Referral system are still forthcoming. Once they are made, training will be provided 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 - States with an existing CFSP must include the following information regarding CFCIP in the APSR. This submission serves as a report on FY 2002 activities and an application for FY 2003 funds. This information may be included as a separate section of the APSR, or incorporated in sections that are listed in A.1 above, as appropriate.

IV-B UPDATE FOR FY 2002

The Program

The Title IV-E Independent Living Program continue to operate in unison with the Foster Care Program during FY2002 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 and 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 teens 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.

Categories of clients

The Division's 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. Also job search assistance, housing search assistance, community involvement, and board assistance may be provided as 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.

Policies of the Program

A policy committee consisting of IL Coordinators, Area Managers, Family Service Workers and Central Office Policy personnel continue to work on policy revisions regarding the Chafee legislation and to revise existing policy to conform to changes in program goals, activities and services.

Accomplishments

The specific accomplishments and progress made in the past fiscal year toward helping youth make the transition to self-sufficiency; helping youth receive the education, training, and services necessary to obtain employment; helping youth prepare for and enter post-secondary training and educational institutions; providing youth personal and emotional support to youth through mentors and the promotion of interactions with dedicated adults; and meeting each of the program purposes included training and life skills workshops in the following

- Finance/Money Management,
- Vocational Planning,
- Parenting Health and Hygiene,
- Personal Appearance,
- Nutrition,
- Housing,

- Team Building,
- Self-Esteem,
- Legal Issues,
- Job Search/Vocational Planning,
- College Preparation, Duties,
- STD's/Sexual Awareness,
- Conflict Resolution and Community Resources.

1,769 youth (duplicated because youth attended more than one of the workshops presented) and 232 staff attended these workshops.

Trust Fund Program

A trust fund is a “treasury” account budget in the Arkansas Administrative Statewide Information System that provides youth with financial and other appropriate support and services designed to help them transition to adulthood. For Arkansas, the trust fund program for youth receiving independent living services or transition assistance is described as the Educational Incentive Trust Fund for Post-Secondary Students. The fund provides an incentive savings account for students pursuing post-secondary educational goals to that upon completion of the course, aging out of the CFCIP system or being unable to continue or completed the course; there will be funds available to the student. Funds will also help with start-up expenses, housing expenses and other expenses required to complete the transition into adulthood and productivity.

Financial Assistance

Provided financial, housing, counseling, employment, education, and other appropriate support services to 36 former foster care recipients between 18 and 21 years of age.

- Room and board is for rent, utility deposits and food for foster teens that 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. This program served 41 youth.
- Outreach is being provided in the search for "former foster youth" in need of 'After-care Services" by informing staff, foster parents, attorneys ad-litem, Youth Advisory Board etc. of the "After-care" benefits and procedures.

Training

Information on specific training that was conducted during fiscal year 2002, and will be conducted in FY 2003, in support of the goals and objectives include the following:

- 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. 145 foster parents attended training and workshops.
- Independent Living Coordinators were provided training on the Ansell Casey Assessment form and on Gangs and Drugs. Independent Living Coordinators, Family Service Workers and supervisors were provided training on the new policy that incorporated Chafee regulations.
- All life-skills training continues to be available to teens (up to age 21) that have aged out of foster care. 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 that were formerly in foster care.

Support Services

Provided personal and emotional support to youth through mentors and the promotion of interactions with dedicated adults by conducting the following :

- Youth Advisory Board - Arkansas' Chafee Foster Care Independence Program has developed the guidelines, requirements, duties and functions of a Youth Advisory Board. 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. The board met several time in the last year.
- Teen Conference - The Twelfth Annual Teen Conference scheduled in two separate sessions, the first June 3-5, 2002 and the second session June 6 – 8, 2002 was held. Arkansas' CFCIP coordinated and presented the conference instead of using CFCIP funds to contract for this service. There were 100 youth, IL Coordinators, Family Service Workers plus guests and presenters for this conference.

Total youth served was 691.

The Division of Children and Family Services, with approval from Region VI office of the Administration for Children and Families established educational incentive trust funds for youth leaving foster care June 21, 2002. Because this was just recently established, there have not been any youth served or funds expended.

Youth Served prior years--0

Youth Served Projected FFY 2003-- 2

Current Available Funds- \$116,970

Expended to date--0

Projected expenditures FFY 2003--\$2,500

CHAFEE FOSTER CARE INDEPENDENCE PROGRAM

EDUCATIONAL INCENTIVE TRUST FUND FOR POST-SECONDARY STUDENTS

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

AUTHORIZATION FOR ESTABLISHMENT

Written notification was received from the Region VI office of the Administration for Children and Families on May 26, 1994 indicating the amendments to the Arkansas Independent Living Program grant application establishing educational incentive trust funds for youth leaving foster care were acceptable. The notification indicated that the request had been reviewed and been found to comply with requirements provided in ACYF-PI-93-16 and that the information concerning Arkansas' Independent Living Trust Funds was permanent and would remain in effect unless it is rescinded, after notification in writing, to the Commissioner of ACYF.

SOURCE OF FUNDING FOR THE CFCIP TRUST FUND ACCOUNT

The sole source of funding for the Educational Incentive Trust Fund account will be any unencumbered, unexpended funds remaining in any Independent Living grant account on September 30 of the second year that a particular grant award covers. Independent Living grants are awarded for each Federal fiscal year (October 1 through September 30) and are allowed to be expended during two federal fiscal years. e.g. The grant award for the Federal fiscal year October 1, 1996 through September 30, 1997 (FFY1997) may be expended until September 30, 1998. Any funds remaining on September 30, 1998 would be transferred to the Incentive Trust Fund Account. At the point the Educational Incentive Trust Fund is depleted, the program will cease operation and close any and all associated active accounts. No further incentives will accumulate or be credited to any student's account for payment.

Any funds that remain in the Educational Incentive Trust Fund account for a period of six (6) months and are not anticipated to be paid out during that state fiscal year may be placed with the Investment Section of the State Treasurer's Office for deposit to an interest bearing Certificate of Deposit for a period of (not to exceed) three (3) months.

PURPOSE AND USE OF THE CFCIP TRUST FUND ACCOUNT

To provide an incentive savings account for students pursuing post-secondary educational goals so that upon completion of the course, aging out of the CFCIP system or being unable to continue or complete the planned course, there will be funds available to the student to utilize for additional educational expenses, graduation expenses, start-up expenses, housing expenses or other expenses required to complete the transition into adulthood and productivity.

CLIENT ELIGIBILITY FOR PARTICIPATION

Youth who choose to remain in foster care after graduating from high school and enroll in post-secondary educational pursuits such as college, junior college, vocational-technical school or trade school and who sign a post-secondary education participation agreement will be eligible to accrue incentive credits in a ledger account established under their name. Eligibility will continue for as long as the student is enrolled and incentives will accrue until (1) the educational pursuit is completed (2) the student withdraws from the educational program or, (3) their 21st birthday occurs. At that time, their eligibility will cease and any funds accrued in their account will be paid to them.

PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT AND CRITERIA

Youth who participate in post-secondary educational programs will only be eligible for incentive credits for as long as a signed contract following the guidelines below is in force.

Chafee Foster Care Independence Program Contract

For _____
YOUTH NAME

- The youth must be enrolled as a full time student in an accredited institution or he/she will be dismissed from foster care. Youth will apply for and keep active Federal Pell Grant and other available grants and scholarships.
- The youth will maintain a minimum grade point average of 2.0.
- The youth will provide a copy of each semester's grades to the FSW. Youth will agree to sign a release for Worker to obtain information from the institute regarding youth's class schedule, grades, attendance records, and financial aid status.
- The youth will attend all scheduled classes. The youth will contact their Sponsor or CFCIP Coordinator, if they have already acquired 2 absences, for written permission to miss any additional classes.
- The youth will attend a minimum of 10 scheduled Basic Life-Skills Training workshops and/or activities annually.
- The youth will attend DCFS staffings in order to actively participate in establishing, updating, and following their case plan.
- The youth may attain and maintain a job that does not interfere with academic endeavors to assist with support.
- The youth will maintain contact with their sponsor and FSW Worker at least twice monthly totaling 4 monthly visits, unless a waiver has been approved.
- The youth will notify caseworker of any changes in school, work and/or living arrangements within two (2) days of said change.
- The youth will not partake of alcohol, drugs or substances that are not prescribed. Any positive urine analysis may result in immediate dismissal from the IL Program. Youth agrees to submit to random UA when requested.
- The youth may be dismissed from the IL Program if he/she is found guilty of any illegal activity.
- If teen exhibits inappropriate behavior that demonstrates his/her inability to work with Worker, Sponsor, and CFCIP Coordinator; he/she will be dismissed from the IL Program.
- Failure to comply with all contract statements will result in a 'Determination Staffing'.

Outline of Responsibilities:

Freshmen

- Youth will live in a foster home, with their CFCIP Sponsor or if Worker allows, in dorm housing.
- Youth must maintain and pass 15 credit hours each freshmen semester (12 credit hours of basic courses + 3 credit hours of electives).

Upper Classmen

- Youth may live in own residence if the residence is in compliance with *Independent Youth's Residence Checklist (CFS – 370)*.
- No roommates will be allowed for upperclassmen residing in their own residence.
- Youth will comply with all rules and regulations set forth by the landlord. This includes all signed rental and lease agreements.

Sponsor

- Sponsor will attend all staffings and make sure the youth is abiding with the terms of the established case plan.
- Sponsor will assist the youth in maintaining a budget of monthly income and expenses.
- Sponsor will visit the youth twice monthly and will notify Worker of any problems detected during the visit.
- Sponsor will receive and disburse monthly board payment to youth based on the current budget plan.

Family Service Worker

- Worker will initiate an appropriate board payment for youth based on the current budget needs while the youth is in foster care.
- Worker will notify youth and Sponsor, and IL Coordinator of staffings.
- Worker will visit youth weekly, unless a waiver is approved.
- Worker will maintain monthly contacts with Sponsor (can be telephone or e-mail contacts).
- Worker will provide CFCIP Coordinator with a copy of youth's class schedule at the beginning of each semester.
- Worker will provide CFCIP Coordinator with youth's grades, attendance records and financial aid status within seven (7) days of each semester's end.

Chafee Foster Care Independence Program Coordinator

- Coordinator will request CFCIP funding for youth if he/she qualifies.
- Coordinator will notify FSW Supervisors, Youth and Sponsor of all workshops, trainings and activities.
- Coordinator will assist youth in finding resources to prepare him/her for independence.

Participation in the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program will end when the youth has:

- Reached the age of 21 years old.
- Achieved independence so that financial support and social services are no longer needed.
- Decided voluntarily to no longer participate in the IL Program, therefore leaving Foster Care.
- Demonstrated unwillingness or the inability to meet the requirements of the IL Program and/or the terms of the agreement established in the case plan.

I join in an agreement as to the specified conditions of the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program. I have read, understand and voluntarily agree to abide by the contract terms.

Youth's Signature

Date

Sponsor's Signature

Date

Family Service Worker

Date

CFCIP Coordinator

Date

ACCUMULATION OF INCENTIVE CREDITS:

FOR FOUR-YEAR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE:

A credit of \$500 will be posted to the student's ledger account for each full, spring or fall, semester that is completed in accordance with the student's contract/agreement concerning grade point and hours completed.

A maximum credit of \$250 will be posted to the student's ledger account for each completion of six (6) hours or more of courses during summer terms between freshman and sophomore terms, sophomore and junior terms and junior and senior terms.

The total allowable incentive to be posted under this category is \$4,750.

FOR TWO-YEAR OR JUNIOR COLLEGE ATTENDANCE:

A credit of \$500 will be posted to the student's ledger account for each full, spring or fall, semester that is completed in accordance with the student's contract/agreement concerning grade point and hours completed.

A maximum credit of \$250 will be posted to the student's ledger account for completion of six (6) hours or more of course completion during summer terms between first and second years.

FOR VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL SCHOOL ATTENDANCE:

For each six (6) months of study/course time required to complete a vocational-educational study plan in accordance with the student's contract/agreement, a maximum of \$500 will be credited to the student's ledger account.

FOR SPECIALTY AND TRADE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE:

For a training/course period lasting 3-6 months, a maximum of \$500 will be credited to the student's ledger account if completed in accordance with the student's contract/agreement. If the course/training lasts more than 6 months, an additional \$500 will be credited to the student's ledger account for each additional 6-month period or portion thereof after the initial 6-months are completed.

FOR GED TRAINING:

For attending GED courses, completing and passing the final GED examination and receiving the GED Certificate according to the terms of the student's contract/agreement, a maximum of \$750 will be credited to the student's ledger account.

Under no circumstance will the total credited to any student's incentive ledger account exceed \$4,750.

PAYMENT OF ACCUMULATED INCENTIVE CREDITS:

Payment of accumulated incentive credits may occur under any of the following circumstances:

1. The educational course is completed.
2. The student reaches 21 years old.
3. The student withdraws from the educational course (credit is given up to the last semester or course completed).

The student's case must be closed and notification forwarded to the Independent Living Unit Manager. The Unit Manager will confirm and verify the total accumulated incentive as recorded in the ledger account for that student and notify, in writing, the Chief Financial Officer for the Division of Children and Family Services of the client name, case number, address and the amount of the state warrant to be issued in payment.

Once an incentive accumulation has been verified and paid and the case closed, no other educational incentives may be accumulated for and paid to the student. If a student continues in a post-secondary educational plan after receiving their General Equivalency Diploma (GED), they may continue to accumulate credit until one of the above three occurrences takes place.